

WAYLAND * PUBLIC * SCHOOLS



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Dear Families:

It is a struggle to process the senselessness of George Floyd's murder and the resulting expressions of anger and despair that have been on display in protests across the country. It is times like these when we are confronted with an ugly truth: that our country has failed to protect and respect the basic human rights of a group of people based solely on the color of their skin. We (Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent, and Caroline Han, Equity and Diversity Coordinator), would like to share some thoughts and support as you engage with your children on these complicated and vital issues.

As a white man, I know that I cannot fully understand the experiences of discrimination and mistreatment that people of color face in this country every day. The events of the last few weeks have reminded me that I take certain privileges for granted, such as jogging on a street in a predominantly white neighborhood just as Ahmaud Arbery did. The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, alongside Amy Cooper's unabashed weaponization of racist tropes, have hammered home the urgency of addressing our country's racial inequities.

As a first generation Korean-American, I have been acutely aware and deeply saddened by the racialized impact of COVID-19. The acts of hatred and violence against Asians and Asian-Americans during the pandemic have revealed our country's long standing anti-Asian racism ("the Chinese virus"). In addition, the unequal toll of the pandemic has exposed glaring health disparities that has resulted in disproportionate death rates among Black, Latinx and Native American communities. Then, we were dealt another blow with the tragic succession of murders of innocent Black people: Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. As a parent and educator, I struggle to find the right words to help students and my own children process inexplicable violence against people of color. Over the years, I have learned that the goal is not perfection, but rather engagement. I don't want to leave children to make sense of complex news stories and events by themselves when they don't yet have the knowledge or skills to do so. If you are also looking for guidance on how to talk to your children, here are two resources that I found helpful: [100 Race-Conscious Things You Can Say to Your Child To Advance Racial Justice](#) and [How to Talk to Your Kids About Race and Racism](#).

We have shared our respective identities and responses to the crisis because it is our first step in preparing to engage with students in courageous conversations. We have found that an awareness of our own identities and life experiences have helped us to provide more effective support for students and staff. Please feel free to let us know how your conversations go by emailing us at arthur_unobskey@wayland.k12.ma.us and caroline_han@wayland.k12.ma.us.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Caroline Han in black ink.

Caroline Han, Diversity and Equity Coordinator

Handwritten signature of Arthur Unobskey in black ink.

Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent