



Good evening,

I am deeply saddened by recent events in Buffalo and across our country. The senseless death of George Floyd and the resulting protests and civil unrest compel me to write to you. We can not go about our lives without recognizing the deep divisions in our nation and acknowledging this historic turning point.

At SEM, we unequivocally believe that intolerance, injustice, and institutional racism have no place in our community or our nation. It's in our Vision Statement:

*Secular since its founding in 1851, Buffalo Seminary provides a setting in which mutual respect is a fundamental principle around which students learn to value people from diverse backgrounds and to accept others on their merits. Having developed this appreciation and awareness, they are better equipped as adults to help forge connections across diverse communities; a necessity for the world they will inherit.*

We are a stronger school because of our purposeful commitment to diversity and our willingness to examine complex issues in our classrooms and through our interactions with one another. During this time of unrest and uncertainty, we cannot shy away from the difficult task in front of us. It is time to reflect upon what we value and to act in accordance with our beliefs. We have to ensure that indeed we are fostering a community where students can forge connections across diverse communities. Every student must feel valued. Each girl at SEM must share equally in the feeling that she's home when she comes through those big wooden doors.

We must continue to create opportunities for open and honest dialogue and to listen to one another for understanding. Our work continues at SEM so our shared values and beliefs can carry us as we navigate the complex world.

Each of us cares deeply and that is why this is so difficult. While so little is certain and we have always worked towards a more enlightened equitable future, I can make the unwavering promise that I will work harder to ensure that we do better. I find my strength and my hope in the SEM community. Our commitment to educate with compassion and conviction will guide us as we strive to make a difference at SEM and beyond. I know that we can and will.

Helen