

Dear Colleagues,

This week's memo is attached. My most important message to you is too long for the memo so am including it here:

Please join me in taking time today to be thoughtful or prayerful about the horrific injustice to Mr. George Floyd, who was murdered last week by white police officers in Minnesota, as well as the outpouring of grief and violence in Philadelphia and other cities in our country in response to this injustice. I am certain you share with me the horror of what has happened in our country as it relates to the treatment of the Black and African American community in the United States, as illustrated by Floyd's murder as well as countless others.

To our employees who identify as Black or African American, I stand with you. I am deeply sorry about the injustices you live with in this country and the reminder, as shown in Mr. Floyd's and Mr. Ahmaud Arbery's murders, that you live in a country where you cannot feel safe or secure for yourself or your family. I am sorry for the deep pain and anger you endure and pray for justice and advocacy for true freedom and liberty.

To our employees who do not identify as black or African-American, we need to provide validation to the voices of our Black and African American employees, students, parents and families. Your voices matter, your messages matter. Our responsibility to the Black and African American community is that we truly listen with empathy, that we seek understanding, and that we do these things with as much empathy as possible. They need to know that in no uncertain terms, we as a community are firmly in support of them and all people that suffer injustice.

We need lead with empathy and action as the Black and African American community deserves this, and so much more. In unity, we must:

- Be informed. Please know the details and be informed when community members, particularly our students, talk about Mr. Floyd's murder. It is important we are prepared to fully understand the horror and fear of the incident and how it impacts them.
- Be prepared to listen- there is deep pain and anger for our Black and African American students, and outrage and sadness for us all.
- Be prepared to acknowledge the injustice.
- Be prepared to the confirm our commitment to justice.
- Be prepared to affirm GA's commitment to ensuring a safe, caring, and brave community for our students and ourselves. Remind students that both our Mission and

Civility Pledge values a community rooted in justice, kindness, and respect and we will work toward these ideals no matter what happens in our world.

I know that parents of young children vary in their decisions about what tragic news they do and do not share with their children. If this news comes up in your morning meetings or individual times with students, you should be prepared to listen and respond using the guidelines above. Know that some students will know and others may not. I will be sending a message to parents about how we will respond in my newsletter to parents.

I will be working with Leigh and Sarah to arrange time for LS students who identify as Black or African American to gather as an affinity group in some capacity. We will need to work on details so will be in touch as we have them.

We will take time in our LS Connections meeting tomorrow at 3:30 to talk more. Please reach out to Sarah, Leigh, or me if you want to talk further with ideas, concerns, ideas, or feedback.

With Gratitude,

Sue

Sue Donohue Szczepkowski
Head of Lower School