

June 6, 2020

Sylvester Families,

I am certain this letter finds you and your family reflecting on the state of race relations in America following the recent murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. I am certain you are aware of the protests demanding justice. I am deeply saddened by the loss of life, the absence of justice, and prevalence of ignorance and apathy regarding the plight of Black and African-Americans. How does this happen in a society committed to justice, equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? 400 years of oppression.

If you are a reader of history, you will know Black and African Americans have been constitutionally and socially dehumanized. Ibram Kendi said “Racially discriminatory policies have usually sprung from economic, political, and cultural self-interest, self interests that are constantly changing.” If you are worried that I am preaching politics in school, that is not my goal. I am advocating to restore the humanity of Black and African-Americans.

As an educator, I am wondering what we are teaching our children. Why do we obscure, exclude, and distort the truth? Why are we so afraid to talk honestly and openly about the benefits of discrimination as the cause of racist ideas, ignorance, and hate? What explanation do we have for our children that so many Americans say, “I am a good person, I am not racist,” while racism dominates our institutions, policies, and laws, and actions?

Speaking of actions, are we doing enough? We will only have change when we have changed our laws, policies, teaching practices, our minds, and our hearts. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

“We are in the same storm, but we are not in the same boat.” I know we have people in this community that are also demanding justice and change. I invite each of you to stand with me and figure out how we will advance the cause of anti-racism to restore our dignity and humanity.

Sincerely,

Gil Parsons
Principal, Sylvester Middle School

Sylvester Weekly Learning Schedule

Next week the final weekly learning schedule will be sent. The last week of school will be for make-up and support, so we will not be sending a learning schedule for the last week (June 15th - 19th). The Weekly Learning Schedule for June 8th -12th will be sent through Synergy and Google Classroom. All Sylvester Weekly Communications and the Sylvester Weekly Learning

Schedules are posted on the Sylvester website under **Academics>School Closure 2020**. Please look for emails from teachers, check Google Classroom for assignments, and check Synergy for posted feedback from teachers. You will receive a text and a robo call to remind you that the learning plans have been sent to your students.

Grading: Students will receive either a pass (P) or incomplete (I) for the 4th quarter and 2nd semester grade. Please contact your child's advisor, teacher, or counselor if you have questions about your child's grade or needs for make-up.

Sylvester Event Plan

To commemorate the end of year, we will be holding a virtual school-wide assembly. During this assembly, we will be presenting a talent show, celebrating the 8th grade student awards and Move Up, and hearing messages from the high school principals from Mt. Rainer and Highline High School, Principal Gil Parsons of Sylvester, and Burien City Mayor Jimmy Matta.

Unfortunately, the circumstances of the pandemic have forced us to cancel the 8th grade party. The PTSA has chosen to provide a special Move Up gift for 8th graders. 8th grade students can pick up these gifts on June 11th (last names A-L) & June 12th (last names M-Z).

Community Resources

This is a reminder that the district website and the Sylvester website have links to updates and additional resources. Please visit the district website weekly for updates and let your family, friends, and neighbors know that Sylvester is a meal site.

Here is the link to the [Latest Updates](#)