

June 8, 2020

A Letter from Superintendent Brady Johnson

We are Stronger Together

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and the countless Americans who have been the victims of racial injustice and oppression. Iredell-Statesville Schools remains committed to fighting systematic racism and violence in America through conversation, action, and education. Horace Mann eloquently stated that, "Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery."

We collectively realize that words are simply not enough, and that we must, as an educational institution, put our words into action. We believe that it is the job of all educators to support the positive racial identity of young people. Educators can't do that work unless they have a thorough and complete understanding of institutional racism and steps that educators can take to address this issue. To that end, I-SS has committed over \$100,000 of grant funding for the 2020-2021 school year to provide professional development to teachers at every school across the district to weave culturally responsive practices and positive racial identity into each of our schools.

Another important step for I-SS has been a project we have led over the past year. This work, known as Partnership for Equity Iredell, has assembled private citizens, governmental leaders, business and civic leaders, and faith-based leaders from across our county to engage in training that helps individuals better understand the roots of systemic racism and how to avoid being an unconscious promoter of discrimination and division.

I-SS strongly believes that it is our job to promote an educational environment that strives to educate all of our students. We recognize that there is much work to be done in regard to true equality, and we commit to foster working and learning environments that improve outcomes for all children.

An important dialog in our community has already begun. We are eager to continue work with various agencies and groups in Iredell County as we continue to persistently think about, read about, and talk about racism and equality. Each of us has a role to play in our community, and I-SS is committed to the journey.

Respectfully,
Brady Johnson

