



Brookfield Public Schools

"Create Your Tomorrow"



June 17, 2020

An Open Letter to Our Community:

Our nation is grappling with systemic issues it has struggled to address for generations. Individuals, including citizens in Brookfield, are feeling the need to act. We are all disturbed by the events that have revealed how racism, a lack of empathy and compassion, and injustice have contributed to inequality among Americans. Action is required, and like so many problems we face, education can bring about long-lasting change. We are committed to ensuring the educational experience in Brookfield is part of the solution.

Laws, policies and practices addressing discriminatory behavior are commonplace. Our district has thoughtfully designed policies to protect the rights and dignity of students, staff, and members of the community. However, we must enhance our policies by facing the underlying attitudes and beliefs that contribute to racism. In both its intentional and unintentional forms, racism has no place in Brookfield Schools. As a district, we remain committed to being a safe, supportive, and inclusive community. We respect and value the diversity of our members and embrace opportunities to learn from and grow with each other. Recognizing and raising awareness about biases regarding race, gender, orientation, religion, and other differences, and addressing these issues through culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate curriculum is important and foundational in a 21st century education. We must educate our students to recognize racial bias in themselves and others, and how to properly address it when it occurs.

It is the responsibility of a comprehensive education to ensure that the next generation understands the history of racism in the United States and its continued impact on the present. Our State Commissioner of Education, Miguel Cardona, has recently stated, "As adults and educators, we must be proactive about making this a teachable moment by addressing issues of racism and inequity head on."

As a district, we believe that actions make a greater impact than words. The Board of Education and Superintendent are scheduling a summer retreat to set specific and actionable objectives to address diversity, equity, and race in our district's educational priorities. Real change takes dedication and focus, and we will use the summer workshop to build substantive actions, some of which will have immediate impact and others that will grow and thrive over time.

Civil and peaceful movements inspire unity, compassion, and action. We are committed to ensuring all students, staff members, and families feel welcomed, safe and supported. Only by teaching our students to humbly recognize problems, to have the courage to reflect and show empathy, and to solve complex issues can we help them *Create Their Tomorrow*.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosa Fernandes
Chair, Board of Education

Dr. John W. Barile
Superintendent of Schools

The sole reason for the existence of our profession is the student