



Empowering Partnerships For Education

Maria Edelberg, Ed.D., Executive Director

Delaware County Intermediate Unit
Education Service Center
200 Yale Avenue
Morton, PA 19070
Phone: 610-938-9000 | Fax: 610-938-9887
www.dciu.org

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Dear DCIU Staff, Families, and Friends,

First, I am thinking of all of you and appreciate your caring for your families, our children, our clients, and each other during increasingly difficult times. Second, I wanted to take this time to acknowledge the understandable anger, pain, and unrest in our country today. An extremely challenging event has recently occurred when we were already under tremendous stress and strain from the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis.

We witnessed on May 25, the heartbreaking death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man who died in Minneapolis, Minnesota due to the actions of a white police officer. Mr. Floyd's tragic death has played out repeatedly in the worldwide media as millions have watched in shock and horror. What has followed this unthinkable act are protests, marches and riots in cities throughout the country and around the world by people of all races, who are angry, disheartened and frankly, tired of seeing yet another black life senselessly taken at the hands of a police officer.

What caused George Floyd's horrific death, and sadly, so many others in the African American community before him, is wrong and reprehensible, and justice must be served. Ongoing racial injustice, combined with COVID-19 and the economic impacts, have caused deep pain in all of our communities. In addition to this most recent injustice, we must address the systemic issues, disparities, and racism that exist in our society, causing devastating inequality.

Incidents like the one the world just witnessed sparked the battle cry, *Black Lives Matter*. At DCIU, we truly believe that black lives matter, as well as all other lives. But, sadly, George Floyd's death is yet another example that demonstrates that black lives, in particular, have not been valued equally throughout the course of our nation's history. As an educational organization of diverse staff serving a very diverse population of students and families, we recognize that we are all different and we value those differences in all! We strive to treat each person with fairness and equality. During this very challenging time, we encourage all of us to learn even more about how to support each other on our journey toward racial understanding, to recommit to helping each other become more aware of social inequality and to work toward positive change. Our voices, actions, and commitment to learning, growing, and being part of the solution is critical.

We are all educators and play a valuable role that impacts how our young people operate in the world by giving them somewhat of a perspective on race and other aspects of life. By teaching about the historical foundations of race, and not shying away from the difficult conversations involving racism, we can help students and each other better understand how race affects our lives and our students' lives.

Further, we encourage families to take this time talk to your children about what happened to Mr. Floyd and other incidents of racism and injustices in our society. Incorporate race and social justice into your conversations and encourage the children to judge not by the color of one's skin or one's ethnicity, but by the content of one's character, as Dr. Martin Luther King implored many decades ago. Again, it is not an easy conversation for sure, but if we are ever going to see real change, we must be courageous enough to stand up for what is right, to educate one another, and actually be the change we wish to see.

We must treat each other with compassion, dignity, and respect. We must stand up for justice and equality for all. We must be part of the solution and make our world a better place for our children, future generations, and for ourselves. Our voices and actions matter. All lives matter. Our collective goodness must be drawn upon as a strength of change and progress. Together, we can make a difference.

Please keep Mr. Floyd's family in your prayers and all families who have lost a love one during this unprecedented time. Please be safe and remember to take care of your families and loved ones.

Sincerely,



Maria Edelberg
Executive Director