Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Dear Gahanna-Jefferson Families,

The recent senseless killing of George Floyd is a stark reminder that we live in a deeply broken and troubled world, a world where not everyone is valued equally. Like you, I watched the violence erupt in Columbus and other cities across our country, and I was deeply saddened by our community’s grief. The pain and anguish are visceral and heartbreaking.

I’m certain the events of the last few days are undoubtedly weighing heavily on our students. As many watch the news or tune into social media, they too may wonder if they are in danger. This, on top of so many lost opportunities as a result of COVID-19, seems too much to bear.

We understand the events of the past few days are not simply about one incident, but about the deep history of systemic racism, implicit bias and social injustice in our society, our institutions and our schools. This requires that in the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools we redouble our efforts to prioritize equity, inclusion, and diversity initiatives in our classrooms and throughout our schools.

This work has always been crucial, but in these times it has never been more important to the health and well being of our students, especially black students and students of color. Like the rest of our nation, we have a lot of work to do.

We are committed to driving out racism and creating a more just world, and we recognize that as educators of the next generation we have a unique role and responsibility to teach others to lead that charge.

As always, we appreciate your support and partnership in this work.

Sincerely,

Steve Barrett
Superintendent
Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools