

# DEPEW UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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June 5, 2020

To the Depew School-Community;

As I continue to be overwhelmed with sadness, astonished by outrageous violent behaviors, disappointed by various reactions and simply at my tolerance limit of watching these events continually unfold in the media; I have to exclaim: **ENOUGH!** Enough inequity. Enough pain. Enough violence. Enough racism. Enough oppression. Enough perpetuation of privilege at the expense of others.

I am writing to you with overwhelming feelings of sadness and dismay following the actions that led to, and then followed the death of George Floyd, including what is unfolding in the Western New York Region. Speaking with others from across our school- community, I know that these feelings are widely shared.

First, we owe our children more. We must lead the way to facilitate change that will create lasting equity for all people in our school-community.

Second, we must be committed to promoting the improvement of practices to provide inclusive, equitable environments free from hatred and racism.

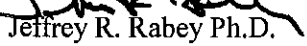
Finally, as Dr. Joy DeGruy said, *"no one is born racist; it is modeled, learned, and passed along through generations where it poisons and paralyzes its victims and corrupts its perpetrators. If we are to eradicate this persistent evil we must see to its structural and institutional roots. And with swift and collective action hold those that govern and that are governed accountable for its elimination."*

The violent and oppressive events highlighted in the media this past week and that we continue to witness have underscored the importance of equity and inclusion efforts. It is imperative that we find ways to engage in constant self-reflection, encourage constructive conversations, and make changes to our current practices. We must engage with one another, really listen and collaboratively design learning environments that will be liberating for all.

It is challenging to connect and provide emotional support to our students in the same way during distance learning, but our school counselors continue to work hard to provide support to our students. Please contact your principal or school counselor if your child is in need of additional support.

Though we are proud of, and often celebrate our diversity, we will continue to ask for your support as we work to make Depew Schools a school-community where all feel welcomed and loved. The future change that we all need to see in society begins here, with the Depew Family, where we educate our leaders of tomorrow. I want all of our students, staff and families to know that you are important, we care and are here for you through challenging times.

With a heavy heart,

  
Jeffrey R. Rabey Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Depew Union Free School District

*"Inspiring, Challenging, Achieving"*