June 10, 2020

Dear Hueneme Elementary School District Community,

In recent weeks, protests and demonstrations that call for action to dismantle institutional racism have occurred locally, throughout America, and around the world. The Hueneme Elementary School District Governing Board would like to acknowledge and mourn with the nation, not only the killing of George Floyd while in police custody, but also the tragic killings of other Black Americans. This is not the first time in American history we have seen protests and other calls for justice and equity by minoritized populations, but this moment feels very different. This moment has highlighted institutional and systemic racism that is built into organizations and calls for deep structural change. As a public school system, we have a responsibility to take action to identify and dismantle institutional racism and inequities that exist in our school district. As your locally elected Board members, we are writing to you to communicate our sense of urgency, pledge to fight implicit racism, injustice, and inequitable treatment of our students, and lead an anti-racist agenda that makes equity a human right. Additionally, we want to invite input from your perspective and provide you resources to support you in responding to your children’s questions and fears in ways that are productive for them.

At last night’s Board of Education meeting, during the Superintendent and Board comments, we shared that we need to do more to fully engage in understanding equity and embracing diversity. To realize our vision of **inspiring and empowering all students to thrive everyday**, we believe that the value of eliminating racism and implicit bias must be embedded in our public education system. As a school district, we pledge to work with our Collaborative Leadership Team to look deeply within our standard practices to identify and eliminate inequities in educational opportunities that currently exist in our system. We will apply an equity lens to our policies, curricula, and discipline practices. We are committed to this important conversation and pledge to strive towards being a safe, diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. We are committed to continuing our efforts to provide equitable educational opportunities and support professional learning in implicit bias and anti-racism for all Hueneme Elementary School District employees. We will engage in conversations with our public safety partners; the Hueneme and Oxnard Police and the Ventura County Sheriff departments. We believe that public education has the honor and responsibility to prepare our students to become contributing members of society who demonstrate compassion and respect for one another.

The [Ventura County Office of Education](https://www.vcoe.org) has an excellent resource page with information to help parents and educators guide discussions with children about racial justice. Additionally, our school counselors have put together resources that are available on the [HESD Counseling Corner webpage](https://www.hueneme.org/counseling). Families are invited to reach out to our Superintendent, Dr. Christine Walker with questions and special needs.
We know that words and public statements are inadequate; however, we want to actively build an inclusive and supportive community, learn from each other, grow together, and appreciate the diversity of our values, perspectives, and life experiences.

Respectfully,

Darlene Bruno
Board President

Siugen Constanza
Board Clerk

Bexy Gomez
Board Member

Scott Swenson
Board Member

Charles Weis, Ph.D.
Board Member

Christine Walker, Ed.D.
Superintendent