

To Our Beloved College Park Academy Community,

Our entire country, state, county, and College Park Academy are not well, right now. We are hurting. Especially, our black community members, board members, staff, students, and families. Building on the already disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on our minority communities, we continue to see institutional racism, leading to horrific incidents like we witnessed under two weeks ago with the unnecessary and violent death of George Floyd. The hunting and killing of Ahmaud Arberry, in Georgia. The nonsensical and illegal no-knock warrant that led to the death of Breonna Taylor, in Louisville. On top of being your principals, we are fathers, too. We feel a fatherly relationship to all of our students. To think of any of our children begging for their deceased mother, while repeatedly saying "I can't breathe" is frankly beyond comprehension. It is disgusting.

As your principals, we recognize, words of sympathy are not enough. We are outraged. We are principals of a school which, in it's setup alone, being a choice school for our scholars and families will help us champion equity for our scholars. But this alone, is not nearly enough. We condemn racial violence, but we also condemn the institutionalized racism that clearly still exists in our country in healthcare, socio-economic opportunities, environment, and of course, education.

As your school leaders, we vow to reflect on specific institutionalized forms of racism we still see in our schools, and address them head on. We will lead conversations around being a culturally responsive school, and continue to work to mitigate racial disparities in our discipline policies. We have encouraged our teachers to not shy away from laying out facts for our students to analyze, synthesize, and in turn, form their own opinions. The ONLY way we will become a better society, and we MUST be better, is through our shared understanding in education that teaching racial equity is non-negotiable. We must be intolerant to the idea that one person has the right to end the life of another because of their skin color.

We are also vehemently against the overt attacks on the citizens of this country peacefully exercising their constitutional right to assemble. Peaceful protestors are showing a sense of urgency for justice. This cannot, and will not be ignored. We all must educate ourselves on the policies which contribute to the institutionalized racism in this country, and then support policy and politicians who fight against these unfair

structures and systems. We must end these horrific scenes of racism we are seeing far too often in our country. We must be better.

We are both white. We do not have to fear being pulled over by the police. We do not fear being approached by an officer. We are, however, painfully aware that this is not the case for everyone. Black citizens do fear these actions, and we, as two white men have an obligation to not stand idly by. We need to be part of the change we so much desire. Black Lives Matter. Period. With our actions, we aim to reaffirm our commitment to social justice, diversity, equality, and inclusion at College Park Academy. We will, and must build a more just and fair future.

Your Principals,

Mr. Gordon Libby

Mr. Steven Baker

High School Principal

Middle School Principal