

WHAT TO DO:

- 1. MAKE A COPY OF THIS LETTER.**
- 2. CHANGE THE DETAILS TO SUIT.**
- 3. SEND TO YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT.**

Thank you to Tamara LaLande and Anna Yates for providing research and template. Accessed via Rachel E. Cargle at The Great Unlearn.

I know this year has been full of challenges and, as a District, you have worked tirelessly to overcome those challenges. As a **(parent/community member)**, I appreciate your support for our students during the pandemic. However, we are in yet another moment of heightened racial awareness in America. While we collectively mourn the murders of Black Americans and navigate the path forward, it is absolutely critical to consider the impacts of these traumatic modern events, and their direct connection to Black American history, on students of all races. Not only do we need to address the emotional state of students and staff, but also make changes that create real, positive impacts on our student's lives and collective futures.

I, **[insert name]**, as a concerned **{Parent, guardian, sibling, community member}** to a child in this school district, am calling on [name of school district] to ensure there is a safe learning environment for every student. I want to see the efforts by the district's faculty and school board to take deliberate anti-racist actions within Board and academic communications with parents, students, staff and faculty.

To be clear: ignoring the injustices of widespread, normalized racism and intolerance of others, or simply making a statement, is not an option. Science and research has proven time and time again that:

- Children have learned racial bias in facial recognition by 3 months of age 1. Black children as young as 3 years old have been shown to have significantly lower self-esteem based on their own identification of their skin color (Clark, B. and Clark, M., 1940's. "The Doll Test"), which has also been linked to lower academic achievement.
- Black students are significantly more likely to receive discipline resulting in removal from the classroom (suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement and more) than their peers, which has been directly linked to incarceration rates.
- Accountability is one of the only known factors that lead to behavioral changes in people who occupy positions of power.

As a K-12 educator you are a trusted leader, mentor and role model to countless students, who will grow up to be the next generation of Americans. We expect you to teach and lead by example, exhibit kindness, provide resources, and be a safe space for students. Talks about race can be challenging but we must turn the silence into dialogue. These conversations are not reserved only for students of color but for students in predominantly white schools too. You are equally responsible for helping our students build their capacity to understand and confront racism as well as, contribute to a society where peace and justice prevail.

What steps will you take TODAY to provide parents with the resources needed to guide these conversations with students at home? What steps will you take to serve the Black and POC students in your schools?

Your schools have the obligation to serve the students who attend them. At this moment, serving your Black students and students of color means openly and loudly affirming your stance as an anti-racist institution, condemning all types of violence against Black and POC in America, offering resources for both education and traumatized individuals, and committing your district to reconsidering how its policies, curriculums and staff can be updated to meet this significant moment. Most importantly, you can ensure that your attitudes and actions are consistently anti-racist as a standard.

Conversations about race profoundly affect our student's lives, and they have power to influence our society's collective strength. I ask you to please take time to continually educate students, staff, and faculty on these matters, ask questions and take action.

Sincerely,

{Sign and Send}

Sources:

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VanDerhei, S., Bechtold, J., & Cauffman, E. (2014). From the school yard to the squad car: School discipline, truancy, and arrest. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(7), 1110-1122. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0103-1>

Lerner, J. S., & Tetlock, P. E. (1999). Accounting for the effects of accountability. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 255-275.