



Renaissance Academy

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To the RA Community:

In the past few months, we in the Renaissance community have faced unprecedented events amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. As new ways of working, learning, living, and shopping came about, we came together and learned a new normal. That new normal had difficult moments that may have gotten easier for some and may have created new challenges for others. We came together to support each other and do our part to make sure that we all remained healthy and safe. There is still unknown in our futures, but I have faith that we will approach the unknown together.

Over the past ten days we, as a human race, witnessed a new atrocity. Now, a well-known name across our communities, a man: George Floyd's life was taken from this world in front of our eyes while being taken into police custody. There is no question - this should not have happened. As the events of the country (and world) unfold we are reminded of the pain, heartache, and fear that our brothers and sisters live in each and every day. We as a school community must come together, once again, and denounce all forms of racism and hatred. We have the power to do better, we must do better.

As a school established upon choice, we pride ourselves on preparing our students to be lifelong learners and contributing members of society. We have the power and opportunity to raise individuals who will be able to not only recognize injustice but have the courage and tenacity to stand up, both when they see an injustice happening and take action when they want to make a change.

We, as the Board of Trustees along with the leadership of the school, stand with our students, staff, and families and commit to consistent and vigilant actions against the racist, unjust, and disrespectful treatment of our ALL people. As noted in Dr. Guarino Buli's recent message to her staff **'There is no neutrality when it comes to hateful acts or harmful behavior. It does not matter to me, at whom the anger is directed or by whom it is incited.'**

This conversation and empowerment toward action are not new to the RA Community. Through specific and deliberate actions we reflect, we learn and we change. In recent years we have enacted student focus groups, led by student leaders and supported by staff. The staff AND students have participated in equity and equality training on issues of racial bias, gender bias, and understanding. Student-driven empowerment has grown and can be seen and heard by the

actions of our MSU, Co-exist, and student-led groups. These trends run through our long-term planning and goals for continuous improvement.

Last night one of our alumni used the RA Core Values and skills that we instilled in her and voiced her concern, on Facebook, that RA has not vocalized any support in regard to the above issues. This action in itself declares the very hope that we will have graduates to speak their mind, in respectful and meaningful ways. This post was an example of what the RA STUDENT in our Vision SHOULD be. In all honesty, it was this post and the conversation that ensued which got me off my chair. I had been spending the last two weeks trying to find the perfect words and decided that it was time to put words on paper. As one of my colleagues on the board stated, "it is not the words that are as important as the actions that follow." Again, we are committing to standing up for injustice and working with all stakeholders to making sure that we are doing whatever we can to bring a brighter future to our world.

We welcome conversation, education, and (friendly) debate in our efforts to make the world a better place for ALL who inhabit it.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out for anything,

Regards,
Daniel Rufo, President, Board of Trustees
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The attached resources have been gathered by our counseling department and are offered to support you and guide conversations in supporting your child as they navigate what they are seeing and hearing around them.

Click any of these links to access the resources:

[22 Books That Teach Young Kids about Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality](#)

[Race and Racial Identity](#)

[Helping Your Child Child Talk About Media Coverage of Community Racial Trauma](#)

[CNN: How to Talk to Your Children about Protests and Racism](#)

[National Museum of African American History & Culture: Talking About Race](#)

[Medium--Lion's Story: Talking to Children After Racial Incidents](#)

[ABC News: How Parents Can Talk to Their Kids about Race](#)

[CNN + Sesame Street - Town Hall to address Racism](#)

[A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice](#)

[How to Talk to Kids about Race and Racism](#)

[NPR What to Say to Kids When the News is Scary](#)

[Helping Children Cope: Talking Tips for Talking About Tragedy](#)

[Talking to Children About Tragedies and Other News Events](#)

[Obama Foundation Town Hall](#)