



ANTIOCH SCHOOL DISTRICT 34

Inspiring personal excellence.

Dr. Bradford Hubbard, Superintendent

June 2, 2020

Dear Friends of Antioch School District 34,

I am deeply troubled by what we have all witnessed recently. The tragic and devastating death of Mr. George Floyd and the subsequent unrest is the latest story highlighting and bringing to the forefront the inequities and injustices that surround us. My heart hurts, and at home, I have struggled to find the words to navigate this conversation, again, with my own children. As a leader, educator, and father, I find it to be my responsibility to reach out and articulate how this impacts us all. In accepting the incredible opportunity to serve in this role, I committed to being honest, transparent, and communicative. In committing my life to leading, teaching, and being a dad, I have committed to being informed, just, fair, and equitable.

My journey has afforded me a variety of opportunities to study, investigate, and wrestle with equity and race. A significant amount of that discovery has been rooted in trying to understand my own identity as a white male and the privilege it has provided me. Additionally, I have committed to building context around, empathy for, and a foundational understanding of the experiences and stories of others. In those experiences and stories, there is so much pride and so much pain. All of us have that pain and pride baked into who we are, how we identify, and what we have lived.

In the midst of a global pandemic, we have been confronted with a national civil and human rights crisis. Let me rephrase that, we are being made keenly aware of the civil and human rights crisis that is not at all new. In being a white male, one of the privileges afforded to me is the ability to lean in and out of reality, conversations, and/or action depending on how difficult, challenging, or uncomfortable that reality, those conversations, and/or the need for action become. When it is hard, it is most important for us to accept our role and truly lead; thus, I am leaning in.

I do not believe anyone possesses the ability to lead those that they know nothing about. Leadership and change take trust. To build that trust, leaders must first listen and seek to understand the hopes, dreams, expectations, and narratives of those they serve. To that end, and in an attempt to forge and foster genuine relationships, please know that I am here to listen. In asking the right questions and hearing, not just listening to, the answers, collectively, we have amazing opportunities to learn and grow. Additionally, we will increase our joint capacity to affect change.

An element of what we are seeing through protest is people finding and using their voice. Through the guidance and mentorship of experts and friends, I have come to realize that allowing, permitting, or encouraging individuals to find and use their voice is not enough. As leaders, we must first create inviting, safe, and authentic spaces for voices to be shared, amplified, and heard. Furthermore, we must ensure that voice has power. Those sharing their narratives have to see the impact and influence they can have on decisions, actions, and change.

Antioch School District 34

964 Spafford Street
Antioch, IL 60002
847-838-8401

Mary Kay McNeill Early Learning Center

817 N. Main Street
Antioch, IL 60002
847-838-8901

Hillcrest Elementary School

433 E. Depot Street
Antioch, IL 60002
847-838-8001

Oakland Elementary School

818 E. Grass Lake Road
Lake Villa, IL 60046
847-838-8601

W.C. Petty Elementary School

850 Highview Drive
Antioch, IL 60002
847-838-8101

Antioch Upper Grade School

800 Highview Drive
Antioch, IL 60002
847-838-8301

www.antioch34.com

If they don't, there are a plethora of other ways they either show or hide their pain, anger, frustration, and truth.

As a school district, it is imperative for us to commit to teaching about justice, equity, and rights. At the same time, we have to be committed to cultivating an environment that not only teaches, but lives, breathes, demonstrates, instills, fosters, believes, and exhibits these tenants and core values. One way that I know how to do that is in ensuring that we are creating window and mirror opportunities for our students, staff, and stakeholders. In the stories we tell, the celebrations we host, the curriculum we use, and the conversations we have, individuals must be provided windows into the voices, perspectives, experiences, and narratives of others. Additionally, they must be able to see and hear themselves in the voices, perspectives, experiences, and narratives. This is our responsivity and one that we embrace in District 34. To serve all, our work must include all.

As we look to evaluate our culture, climate, and environment, we must do so through the lens of equity and justice; but we must also build our system on respect, care, kindness, compassion, dignity, hope, and most importantly, love. Our diversity and differences are our greatest strength. It is our moral imperative and non-negotiable responsibility to make sure our differences are embraced, accepted, welcomed, celebrated, and leveraged in making our schools, district, and community better on behalf of and because of everyone.

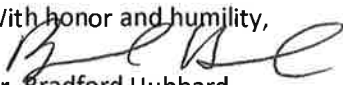
During this difficult, trying, and challenging time, I need you to know that I and we are here. We stand ready to engage in uncomfortable conversation, we commit to strive for equity, we are prepared to continue our learning about cultural competence and relevance, and we will be anti-racist in our work and action.

In the coming days, I hope for strength, courage, bravery, and resolve to all. That includes those feeling this incredible pain. We appreciate and value your voice and story. Additionally, it includes those who have been our first responders and on the front lines of a relentless pandemic for the past three months. May your efforts to protect and serve continue to be safe. We appreciate and value your service.

Just above, I used the word hope. I know hoping for something is not a strategy, but hope is necessary. I hope you trust, believe, and know how much I care about and for this community. I intend to lead to the absolute best of my ability at all times, especially these uncertain ones. Our team is here and I am confident we have the integral pieces and necessary will to fight for, ensure, and find equity, justice, and the change necessary to serve all of our stakeholders.

Be and stay safe and well.

With honor and humility,


Dr. Bradford Hubbard
Superintendent