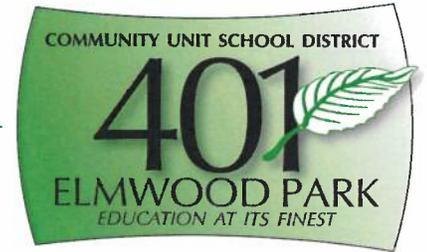


Elmwood Park C.U.S.D. #401

Nicolas D. Wade, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



June 8, 2020

To: The Stakeholders of Elmwood Park CUSD 401
Re: Black Lives Matter and One Elmwood Park

The last few weeks have continued to remind us all about the centuries long series of racial injustices, particularly against the Black community and people of color, that continue to exist in this country. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor are only the most recent instances of individuals who have lost their lives, brutally and unnecessarily, due to these injustices and systemic racism that permeates this country.

A few days prior, the building principals and I read a statement about a "One Elmwood Park." If you did not have a chance to watch the video, you may read it here:

"Students, you are on our minds each day, even though we cannot be together in our classrooms. We have a range of emotions we are struggling with: sadness, shame, anger, disappointment, and fear.

As we watch Elmwood Park, the Chicagoland area, and the global community struggle for answers, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. However, we hope positive outcomes will come from all this pain. In order to be a society built on equity, equality, justice, and kindness - we must listen to each other, stand with each other, and grow together. These actions are the foundation of the institutional and systemic change we so desperately need.

All of us in Elmwood Park must play a role in helping to heal and grow as a community. As schools, we must continue to commit to Equity & Equality, Justice, Diversity, Dialogue, and Reflection. All students should receive the best education possible and receive every support they need to be successful.

We have a moral and ethical responsibility to correct any injustices we see in our schools. We will continue to support culturally responsive practices, focusing on developing equity, justice, and celebrating diversity. We will continue to teach self-awareness, empathy, and the historical impact power and privilege have played on human development. We will continue to reflect as educators and leaders on our own competencies and biases and search for ways to better understand the lived experiences of our community of learners.

Whether you are a Cub, Trojan, Panther, Cougar, or Tiger - we all stand TOGETHER - united as a ONE Elmwood Park Community."

We are reaching out to you as students, parents, educators, and community members to assist Elmwood Park CUSD 401 in an effort to confront racism, injustice, and inequity. Your voices matter and we want to hear from you.

I will be sharing additional information in the coming days and weeks about how District 401 can and will be advocating for equity, anti-racism and pursuing racial justice. We want our community members, which include our students, staff, and families, to know that we see you, hear you, and we stand with you as we fight together against racial inequities. We believe that by addressing these long-standing and pervasive issues as a community, that we can move forward as a community to heal the pain we are feeling.

We believe in and stand with the peaceful protests that are occurring across this nation and internationally and support our students, staff, parents, and community members who peacefully participate. I know there are imperfections in myself and the district, but we can move forward together to ensure the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and the countless others are not in vain. As always, I am available by phone 708-583-5831, email at waden@epcusd401.org, and for any in-person meeting to actively listen on how best to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicolas D. Wade', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Nicolas D. Wade
Superintendent of Schools