

Open letter to the University Place School District Community

In 2020, we have been fighting two threats: COVID-19 and racism. Not only are we challenged by the disruptive effects of a pandemic, we also confront the effects of racism, overt and hidden, individual and institutional.

Why do we speak out about racism at this time? Speaking directly to the black students and parents in our district, we want you to know that we grieve with you during this time. Speaking to all students, families, educators, and community partners of the University Place School District, we want you to know that we will always stand up for justice and advocate for all students in our district. As your voice in the University Place school system, we have dedicated ourselves to school district values that include:

1. Education
 - a. Is fundamental to quality of life.
 - b. Is essential to participatory citizenship in our democracy.
 - c. Supports the advancement of social justice and equity.
 - d. Acknowledges and responds to the diverse needs and experiences of all students.
2. Learning
 - a. Is a lifelong process.
 - b. Enables us to adapt to change.
3. Every individual learner
 - a. Has value and is entitled to be treated with respect.
 - b. Can learn.
 - High expectations promote greater student learning.
 - Hard work and perseverance are essential in order to maximize potential.
 - c. Has unique needs, values and experiences.
 - d. Is entitled to differentiation of resources necessary to promote equity and success.
 - e. Is responsible
 - To family, school and community.
 - To contribute to a safe and civil school environment.
 - For his or her decisions and behavior.
4. The learning environment
 - a. A shared set of basic values and ethical standards strengthens our community.
 - b. A diverse population working toward common goals enriches our community.
 - c. Integrity is necessary for trust, which is fundamental to quality relationships.

These words are only a starting point. We can and must (in our country, our state, and our community) do better, and we must persist in making this current commitment a permanent one.

Incidents including unrestrained and criminal exercise of power against black and brown members of society by police officers whose duty it is to serve and protect ALL community members constitute a call for action to dismantle racism in all our social institutions. Schools have a unique role to play, because in concert with families and local communities, schools have profound influence in shaping the future of our society.

Please join with us in a comprehensive review of school-based structures whose intent is to root out racism, conscious and unconscious, so that ALL our students successfully emerge and contribute to a world we want for them. We must all confront racism, speak out against it, and actively do the hard work of dismantling it. Together, we believe we can.

Sincerely,

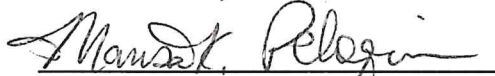
University Place School Board & Staff



Mary Lu Dickinson, President



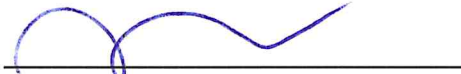
Ethelda Burke, Vice President



Marisa Peloquin, Board Member



Rick Maloney, Board Member



T'wina Nobles, Board Member



Jeff Chamberlin

Secretary of the Board

University Place School District No. 83