



Muncie Community Schools

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Dear Students, Families and Friends,

In light of yet another senseless killing of an unarmed black man at the hands of the police, we at Muncie Community Schools (MCS) want to reaffirm our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. There is no justification for anything less. Racism and racist violence, by action or inaction, is intolerable and unacceptable. The Black Lives Matter movement must include all of us as we support our Black and brown students, teachers, staff and families. It is not a Black problem, but a global problem.

Black lives matter and we must show this fact in our everyday actions moving forward. We are committed to dismantling racism in our schools and acknowledge some practices that are unacceptable, including an inadequate representation of our Black and brown educators, disproportionate discipline and euro-centered curriculum. Here are ways MCS will address diversity, equity and inclusion:

- Last year, we established a cultural competency committee made up of a diverse group of individuals to make sure we are doing all we can to provide a welcoming, inclusive environment for students, families and staff. Based on recommendations from this committee, we are asking the board to appoint Rhonda Ward as our new Director of Diversity. She will also continue in her current role as assistant principal at the high school. Rhonda is well-respected throughout MCS and the entire Muncie community. Additionally, the committee created a plan for cultural diversity training, including implicit bias, which will begin this summer. Before every staff meeting, there will be time to read, reflect, listen and have honest conversation regarding issues of racial justice.
- With input from Ball State University, MCS, community members and experts across the state and nation, we have written an innovation plan along with a more detailed strategic plan that is due to our legislators June 30. This plan consists of five pillars and two foundational principles. One of the foundational principles is culturally relevant teaching and learning, and will be embedded in all that we do—such as curriculum, professional development, social emotional learning and family and community involvement.
- We are committed to prioritizing the recruitment and retention of teachers of color.

- We will require implicit bias training for our MCS School Resource Officers this summer. This kind of proactive approach with our frontline workers responsible for the safety and well-being of everyone inside our schools is just one more way we can provide the best educational environment for every student. We will also require this training for our bus drivers and front office staff.
- We will review our curriculum, to ensure there is relevant material and that classrooms have a variety of texts that include positive, diverse representations.
- We are committed to improving communication with our communities of color through multiple channels.
- We will continue to work to eliminate racist and punitive policies and practices. We have begun the groundwork through our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative that began several years ago, and most recently with the revamping of the 2020-21 Student Discipline Handbook. We plan to incorporate restorative practices in our schools.
- We are strengthening our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) teams in each school to proactively address student behavior so issues do not reach the level of in-school or out-of-school suspension.
- We will dismantle biased practices put into place in order to provide Black students equitable access to gifted and talented programs, Advanced Placement courses and dual credit opportunities. We also will ensure that minorities will be included, considered, and/or represented when it comes to identifying a panel of judges within the schools. Our director of Diversity will assist in these areas.

It is what MCS does in the days, weeks and years ahead that will ultimately make a difference in the dismantling of anti-Black racism that occurs within MCS and beyond. We are committed to a sustained effort to create change where there will truly be equity and justice for all.

Sincerely,

Lee Ann Kwiatkowski
Director of Public Education & CEO
Muncie Community Schools