



Dear East Lansing Public Schools (ELPS) students, families, staff and community,

As we close out the 2019-20 school year, the ELPS administrative team would like to share its collective commitments and action in response to the senseless murder of George Floyd and the longstanding racial injustice and inequities that exist across the nation and within our schools and school community. As school leaders, we are positioned and ready to lead this work and take action, yet we also recognize that we are a team of predominantly white administrators that does not reflect the demographics of our student body. We will listen to our students, families and experts in the field of equity and racial justice as we continue to learn about and understand the experiences of our Black students and families so that we can take action to improve their school experience. We must create a school environment where every student feels a sense of safety, belonging and inclusion, and we know that this cannot occur until our Black students feel this way. ELPS has established district goals in the area of equity for years, and this document will serve as our immediate but fluid guide as we work toward these goals.

#### **To our ELPS students, families and staff...**

- We will **increase our training on and use of Restorative Practices** as an alternative to suspension and other exclusionary consequences, which research has shown are disproportionately applied to Black and brown students.
- We will **take intentional steps to hire more Black teachers and staff** to teach and support you. We know that Black students who have at least one Black teacher are more likely to stay in school and go to college.
- We will **continue our work with the *Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)*** to support our own personal journeys of growth around equity and to inform and guide our equity work in the district. We will also continue to send students and teachers to the MSAN Conferences and support the implementation of their Action Plans.
- We will **establish Equity Teams** at each school building to review and make changes to processes and policies that disadvantage groups of students who have been historically marginalized. These Equity Teams, in addition to school and community stakeholders, will play an immediate and crucial role in the **development of a district Racial Equity Policy**.
- ELPS will no longer employ a School Resource Officer (SRO) and will **remove police presence** in our school buildings during the school day.
- An **administrator will attend meetings of the Black Student Union when invited** so that we can hear from, answer to and respond to concerns, ideas and suggestions.
- We will **continue to implement and develop the Intercultural Dialogue unit** <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xgkG3k74DQE1dhdZ8XQSrHO0ad9oQrwU?usp=sharing> in all of our 9<sup>th</sup> grade English classes and look for ways to **expand these ideas and foster an equity lens in other classes**.

- We will **make curricular decisions through lenses of racial diversity and inclusivity by ensuring that Black and brown people are represented in our curriculum in honest, true and relevant ways.** We invite our students, families and community members to share concerns with our current curriculum, and we commit to having honest dialogue about how to improve. We will **ensure that curriculum committees include Black and brown students and adults.**

- We will **continue and expand professional learning and resources on privilege, implicit bias and microaggressions** to our administration, faculty and staff.

We commit to carrying out these actions to address the sense of safety, belonging and inclusion for our Black students and other students of color and will hold ourselves accountable for these commitments. We acknowledge that there is more work to be done and welcome your input and feedback as we continue to deconstruct the systemic racism that exists in our schools to create a more inclusive environment for our Black students.

Additionally, if you are seeking resources to support conversations with your children or for your own learning, growth or action, here are a few: (more available upon request)

- *Talking to Children after Racial Incidents* article: <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/talking-children-after-racial-incidents>
- Black Lives Matter instructional library with children's read-alouds: [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18pOK3roiwPQ9WF7D2wA0o7Ktr8KwAJeZfn-o6O8T\\_Y/mobilepresent?fbclid=IwAR2WNPtsHnnLMP9PY12IMmBv8qfDS0EdBRKO4wrpAmBNipXt-fl8S8RRKvY&slide=id.p](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18pOK3roiwPQ9WF7D2wA0o7Ktr8KwAJeZfn-o6O8T_Y/mobilepresent?fbclid=IwAR2WNPtsHnnLMP9PY12IMmBv8qfDS0EdBRKO4wrpAmBNipXt-fl8S8RRKvY&slide=id.p)
- Black Lives Matter at School: <https://blacklivesmatteratschool.com/>
- Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/>
- Black Lives Matter Lansing: <https://www.facebook.com/blmlansing/>

Sincerely,

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