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Dear Bridge Families,

I wanted to share with you a few thoughts pertaining to the most recent long list of incidents that underscore the level of racism and injustice that exists in this country. Combine this with the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on people of color, one can hope that we are at a tipping point nationally. Over the weekend, a joint message from Superintendent Hackett and Lexington Town officials was shared ([Town of Lexington - Joint Statement on Recent Hate Crimes](#)). I feel fortunate to work in a community that issues a clear and unwavering stance on what is happening.

These events make me heartsick and underscore for me just how much work we must individually and collectively do to understand the ways that racism is manifested in our country, from systemic policies, to individual acts of violence, to the biases and microaggressions that occur on a daily basis. The challenge with Remote Learning and the school community not being able to be together in one space, during times like these, makes me realize how important it is that our students, staff and community are reminded of our core values, the power of actions and words, as well as the importance of understanding and appreciating the differences within ourselves and others. Even though we are physically distant, I want to reassure you that our faculty and staff are committed to anti-bias work and teaching our students respect for every individual through our Dismantling Racism curriculum.

My commitment as your child's school principal is to continue to challenge myself, staff, and others to fully believe in the potential of each child. We need to confront our fears and doubts in leading social change and be humble and accepting to the voices of people in our community who have been affected by racism. These views and experiences are an integral part of anti-racist change. I have to believe that this will make us better for our children.

As parents/guardians, we often think about protecting our kids, shielding them from harsh injustices, pulling them into a cocoon to keep them untouched by difficult truths. And while exposing young children to certain images or facts would be too much, however, research shows that not talking about race and racial injustice is damaging. Even at very young ages, children pick up on subtle (and overt) messages more than we know - taking in messages through a brief image on a screen, the tone of our voices when we talk about events in the news, even characters absent from stories and books. It's difficult to have conversations about race and

equity with young children, but I encourage families to try. At school, we often use literature to help students start to comprehend the big ideas of social justice. [Lee and Low](#) books are an excellent website to find a range of titles that support multicultural education. [Weneeddiversebooks.org](#) is another. [Social Justice Books](#) is another. And one more from [Embrace Race](#).

For families looking for guidance on how/when to talk to their child about race:

- [Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning about Race & Racism with Young Children and their Families](#) is a good one- put out by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)- has info/links/resources for teachers and parents/families
- [Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk about Racism](#)
- Teaching Tolerance's [resource collection on Race & Racism](#)
- ["Never Too Young to Talk About Race" infographic](#)
- Teaching for Change: ["Teaching Young Children About Race"](#)
- [Facing History- Bearing Witness: The Death of George Floyd](#): lists a number of great resources for further reading

And for a more expansive read, I recommend [Everyday Anti-racism](#) by Mica Pollock, with contributions from many other authors and educators. It is also the core text for one of our district professional development series for teachers.

If you or someone in your family is struggling right now, there are resources available to you, and we are here to help. Please email any member of our school staff and we can help to connect you or your child with support.

Please continue to know that the Lexington Public Schools staff are here to support you and your family. I am hopeful that through positive actions, the negative trajectory our nation is on will change and we will grow stronger as a community and school system.

~Meg Colella