

# PERU CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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6/12/20

Dear Peru CSD Parents, Guardians and School Community,

As a State and as a Country, we are so broken. As I have watched the events that are happening across our Country and in the streets of communities, I have struggled on the message I want to send to our community and the students we serve. The adjectives that fill my soul at this time are of disgust, sadness, outrage and struggle within the turmoil of not understanding how we lost another human life to unthinkable, inhumane actions of domination of one individual over another helpless individual that was in handcuffs. My anger and frustration has stopped me from writing this message until now.

There are a lot of similarities at this time of the two pandemics that we are facing. The two pandemics I am referring to are the COVID-19 and Racism. Both have been very deadly. They have taken human life and are crippling and changing life forever. Whether it is obvious or not at this time, we as educators and parents should know the profound impact this has on our children and it is important to resolve the hurt, the frustration, the lack of understanding of the events that are changing and shaping the lives of our children.

In this moment of time, both of these pandemics are going to forever change our lives and the way we perceive injustices, the social emotional impact, the hate, distrust and biases racism brings the forefront. We struggle as a school community with the uncertainty, the uncertainty of what the “new normal” looks like as we enter the fall and start a new school year. How, where and when are all questions that have yet to be resolved in our plan for the district’s future. We don’t have the luxury of having our students in a “safe” environment within the bricks and mortar of our physical school building. This is a struggle because “How can a district make a difference in our students’ lives as two major events are eating away the core of what was comfortable for a lot of families in the North Country? We need to support them but the way in which we can and should be through a partnership with our families.

I am calling out and asking you to join me in making a commitment to be willing to make the changes we want to see for the future of our children and their ability to navigate through these uncertain times to produce individuals that are strong, compassionate, unaccepting of hatred and the incivility of a sense of entitlement and oppression of another race or individual for that matter.

In the book *White Fragility* by Robin Diandelo, she writes; “We whites who positions ourselves as liberal often opt to protect what we perceive as our moral reputations, hate than recognize or change our

participating in systems of inequality or domination”. I understand the conversations around this topic are hard but we need to begin to have these pointed conversations to face this head on. Given the micro-aggressions that appear to be common in society and the way we look at our unconscious biases that negatively impact other races within our country based on our actions. The time is now.

These are some additional resources I have come across that may assist you in your conversations with your children:

- George Floyd. Ahmaud Arbery. Breonna Taylor. What do we tell our children?  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/05/31/how-talk-kids-racism-racial-violence-police-bruta88065002/>
- Featured Commentary: Trayvon, Troy, Sean: When Racial Biases and Microaggressions Kill.  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/communique/2012/07/microaggressions>
- 100 Race-Conscious Things You Can Say to Your Child to Advance Racial Justice  
<http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-justice/>

I appreciate your willingness and support you have shown through these difficult times. Together, we will get through this but we should grow from our experiences and not allow us to stay in the mode of status quo and be a voice for and to our children for equality.

Take Care and be safe,

Tom Palmer