

Kelly M. Lyman  
Superintendent of Schools

June 2, 2020

Dear Families,

About twelve weeks ago we were all sent home. Told to stay away from others and do our part to keep the citizens of our country safe. We were led to believe that we were *all in this together* and that by working together we would overcome the challenges we faced. But this was a far simpler threat than another that continues to plague our nation. The threat of hatred and lack of acceptance of those different from ourselves. Following the brutal murders of black men and women, some by people empowered to protect us, the citizens of our country have had enough. The resulting protests illustrate the frustration, fear, and desire for change felt by so many.

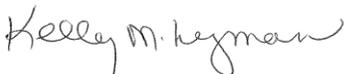
Mansfield Public Schools condemns racism, prejudice, and unfair treatment of others of all types. We work continuously to provide a safe, welcoming environment for all students and families. In times such as these, we who educate the next generation look inward to examine our own practices, to ensure we are doing what we can to shape tomorrow's citizens to address to the ills of today, and to simply develop good people.

Earlier this year, Mansfield was rocked by a series of events that reminds us that racism is present in every community. The community and schools responded with the establishment of a community group (Conversations on Racism in Mansfield) to come together to discuss these issues, a series of professional development trainings for all staff, and a series of community events scheduled to kick-off March 17. These were our beginning steps to come together as a wider community, open dialog, and together work towards a better future.

Just as we have asked our families to partner with us to educate children during this time at home, we now look to our families to help us do what we would otherwise be doing in person in our schools – helping children make sense of what is going on in our country today. What we must be *all in together* is the commitment to raising children who understand others, appreciate and accept all people, and grow to truly be anti-racist adults. We will not overcome the deep issues that plague our nation unless we truly do this together.

Schools will be offering opportunities for parents to come together in the coming days to talk about what is happening and to support each other during this time. For older students, similar opportunities to talk with peers and counselors are also being provided. Having conversations at home to help children process what is happening, raise their awareness, and promote acceptance and anti-racist behaviors is also encouraged. On the following page are several resources that can assist you in with these conversations. Please reach out to your school's principal, psychologist, or counselor if you would like further support or for more information on the work of our schools.

Sincerely,



Kelly M. Lyman  
Superintendent

Talking about race with your children:

Classroom resources that are also helpful to parents

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about>

See items 3 and 4 in this blog post for many helpful resources:

<https://coolmompicks.com/blog/2019/05/08/tips-for-hard-talks-parents-have-with-kids/>

Conversations on Racism Mansfield resources and Mansfield Public Library booklist:

<https://cormansfield.wixsite.com/home/resources>

A great piece from Common Sense Media about how white parents can raise anti-racist kids:

[https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/how-white-parents-can-use-media-to-raise-anti-racist-kids?utm\\_source=%5Btwitter%5D&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/how-white-parents-can-use-media-to-raise-anti-racist-kids?utm_source=%5Btwitter%5D&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=&utm_term=&utm_content=)

31 Children's Books to Support Conversations on Race, Racism, and Resistance:

<https://blog.usejournal.com/31-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-and-resistance-9dbabc28360e>