

Dear Monroe Families-

The last few months have been challenging for all of us on so many different fronts. With the pandemic and its chronic impact, things were already uncertain and unsettling. Now, coupled with the tragic and unjust death of George Floyd, the situation in our community and society has been magnified. With challenges and tragedies come an opportunity for *growth*. I hope you'll join me in finding intentional time to reflect on the opportunities below to help bring unity to our community so it's a safer space for everyone-

Growth in our own lives- consider what can be learned from this horrific tragedy that never should have occurred in the first place. *Who are we in community with? Who are we surrounding ourselves with? Are we interacting with people that act, look, and think the same as or differently than us?* The best way to grow in acceptance and diversity is to engage with others and sometimes, get uncomfortable with what we've been accustomed to. Born in Thailand and growing up in northeast Salem, interactions with people that acted, looked, and sounded different than me was normal. Even with my diverse experiences and background, I still fall short of what it means to truly *stand in the gap for others and elevate the voices that need it most-* Monroe community, let's grow together.

Growth in conversations- this is the most opportune time to engage in challenging and courageous conversations with our children, families, friends, neighbors, and community. As I was reminded numerous times today by friends and social media, people are hurting as the pain is real and tangible. The scars run deep, especially for our families of color; particularly our African-American families. Families, know that we are with you, we *hear* you, we are *here* for you, and we care for you. We are ready to engage with you in conversation where vulnerability is not viewed as a weakness, but as a strength. I hope you too have a similar conviction- Monroe community, let's grow together.

Growth in our school- even though the year is coming to an end, we're already processing how we can continue making Monroe a more safe, inclusive, caring, warm, and hospitable place where ALL feel welcomed and supported. From classes and curriculum to community engagement opportunities, we'll need the active participation of all stakeholders to move forward. We want to ensure we're engaging with our students, staff, and community to address and confront issues of intolerance, bias, racism, equity, and prejudice that still impact our community. There is no greater or more relevant opportunity than now, so please consider partnering with us- Monroe community, let's grow together.

The injustices and inequalities we are facing will not go away overnight. Our district and community needs your voice as they are already hard at work to ensure we come away as people that are more caring, compassionate, empathetic, just, merciful, accepting, and respectful than ever before. This will take *growth in our own lives, in conversations with others, and in our school and community*. As I conclude my twelfth year of being in education, I am reminded daily that our work as educators and parents is not so much about the head work, but the heart work- Monroe community, let's grow together.

I'm available until June 26th to Zoom if you'd like to connect. Please don't hesitate to reach out. Below you'll find helpful staff contacts and links to resources to help children feel safe and secure in these times of unrest-

- Carrie Tilson- School Counselor, tilson_c@4j.lane.edu
- Brian Watson- Assistant Principal, watson_b@4j.lane.edu
- Sun Saeteurn- Principal, saeteurn_s@4j.lane.edu
- [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for educators and parents for supporting vulnerable students in stressful times](#)
- [Call for action to end racism and violence against people of color](#)
- [Talking to Kids About Discrimination](#)
- [Beyond the Golden Rule - A parent's guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice](#)
- [Talking to Students from USA Today](#)

- [Talking to Children About Tragedy](#)

Sincerely,

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