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Regional School District
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T.E.A.M
(Together Everyone Achieves More)

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Educating our Kids about Racism and Inequality

Dear Families,

The year 2020 has been difficult for adults to fathom, let alone children. Faced with a world-wide pandemic and a crisis of racial injustice, adults are now tasked with helping our kids make sense of the world in which we live. This is a tall order. There are no easy answers or explanations.

Racism and inequality has been taught in public school systems for decades. We were taught the heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. We were inspired by the courage of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks who stood up to the blatant racism and segregation existing during the middle of the 20th century. We may have taken part in an exercise similar to Jane Elliot's demonstration of segregation (based on eye color) to learn empathy. We were taught these lessons. So why have we not learned?

Sometimes it is easier to focus on the past, the blatant, the obvious rather than look inward. It is more difficult to analyze the present: the right here, right now. As educators, it is more common to study racial injustice in the context of history rather than current events. However, because of social media and more video footage than ever before, the issue of racial injustice is real as a current crisis. Schools, families, and society must confront what was before deemed "a problem, but not here" and "a product of a former generation".

What can we do to create positive change? It has to start with self-reflection. We need to recognize that we may not fully understand. We have to seek perspective by reading literature, finding credible resources, and having candid conversations. We have to be okay with having uncomfortable conversations and challenging closeminded thinking and behavior. We have to commit to modeling activism for our kids. We have to stop being bystanders and become upstanders.

As assistant superintendent, I understand the need for incorporating this thinking in the PRE-K – 12 curriculum of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District. Working with Dr. Azar and our school committee, we hope to engage all stakeholders in this important work.

Let's empower our kids to be activists for equality by working together, learning together, and teaching together. Through education, we can make positive change.

The mission of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, in partnership with parents and the community, is to provide students with the tools, including technology, to acquire knowledge, apply skills, critically analyze information and issues, and develop social responsibility.

Dighton-Rehoboth does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected group.

Sincerely,



Joseph Pirraglia, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent

Recommended Resources to Start the Conversation

Center for Racial Justice in Education: <https://centerracialjustice.org/>

American Psychology Association: *Uplifting Youth through Healthy Conversations about Race*:
<https://www.apa.org/res/parent-resources/>

PBS: *Talking to Young Children about Race and Racism*: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism>

National Association for the Education of Young Children: *Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning about Race and Racism with Young Children and their Families*:
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2018/teaching-learning-race-and-racism>

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