June 5, 2020

Dear SSD staff and families,

It is with deep sorrow that I’m writing about yet another crisis in our country. This one began on May 25 in Minneapolis when George Floyd’s life was taken from him in a senseless, unnecessary act.

What we have experienced since then is a country in turmoil over the heartbreaking loss of the life of another black man and a community that is at times, scared, hurt, struggling, frustrated and angry.

So, where do we go from here?

- As a District, cultural proficiency training really brought to the forefront the fact that systemic racism exists and affects our students, families and staff members of color. We know that inequities exist, are committed to working through them, and are continuing our work in social justice at our schools.
- At SSD, we believe in dignity and respect for all. Dignity transcends differences. Everyone is born with dignity and holds it to the same degree. Dignity is the central point of all equity work. Harassment, discrimination or violence toward anyone is not tolerated for any reason at SSD.
- We value the diversity of our students and staff, are committed to inclusion and equity, and understand the importance of empathy and listening. I encourage you to listen, reach out to one another and offer empathy and support. Listen closely and seek understanding. We will work together to be better.

Now more than ever, we are committed to treating all people with dignity and respect. And we will continue to denounce racism, bigotry, Intolerance and prejudice. We care about you and are here to support you.

Take care and stay safe.

Elizabeth Keenan, Ph.D.
SSD Superintendent