



Dear Washington Township Community,

As my correspondence reaches each of you it is my desire that everyone is safe and healthy, though I do so with a heavy heart. I write to you from a place of anguish and grief - grief from the unsettling death of Mr. George Floyd, and anguish over the peaceful protests that have been inhibited by ill-intended participants.

While these tragic events, along with the pandemic, have been catastrophic I believe the Washington Township Community will not only persevere, but use these events as a learning opportunity to reflect upon our values of equality and justice and those that we practice. As tragic as these events may be, they must be used to bridge the gap between conscious and unconscious bias that we possess no matter how uncomfortable that conversation may be.

As diverse as our backgrounds and experiences are I firmly believe that we, the Washington Township community, have come to this town because of our shared beliefs and values – for excellence in education, for the beautiful environment our friends and families create to engage and protect our children, to know what it means to be Together With Pride. The diversity of our student body, and the varying perspectives of our community bring me joy and hope—overwhelming hope that our children’s and families’ impassioned pleas for social justice remind us that we did not just come to this township to raise and grow our own children, but to raise and grow a community... together.

Please know that our staff is available to assist you and your family. If you or one of your family would like to talk to someone, our trained professionals, as well as school administrators, are eager to assist you. Together we can provide opportunities for our community to be advocates and affect change. We must continue to foster an environment where all members of our community feel welcomed, valued, and accepted.

As the world grapples with the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others before them and as we witness social injustice and economic inequities that have plagued the Black community in this country for far too long — WTPS will remain on the “right side of justice” in support of our Black students, staff, faculty, alumni, community and allies. We will use this inflection point to listen, learn, and lead to improve, strengthen, and evolve both our schools and community. Our Board has embraced this as the top priority, and we are doing the work needed to effect change.

Three years ago, we implemented the district's first Equity Committee to begin the important work of identifying the barriers to curriculum, learning, and activities that students and families may face. The work of this committee has never been more important than today. We are continuing these efforts with vigor as we can do better – we must do better, and the time is now. I call upon our community to strengthen the dialogue that will propel true change and solutions.

WTPS has worked hard to support our Black students but there is much more work to be done. We will be providing a list of resources to support our students and families during this time of crucial change in the coming days. I encourage you to reach out to us, talk to us, and when necessary, educate us. We will listen... and we will hear you.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph N. Bollendorf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph N. Bollendorf  
Superintendent