

The RSU 26 board joins the nation in having being disturbed by some of the events in past weeks ranging from differential (and sometimes fatal) treatment by police to assumptions that a Black person being in a park or neighborhood is unlawful. We recognize that these are not one-time events but are just the tip of the iceberg of the ongoing racism in the lives of people of color.

Education is one of the greatest equalizers and removers of injustice in this country, which is why many employees and board members choose to devote time and energy to this district. This makes it especially important that every person regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity feel not just safe but welcome and valued in our schools.

Moreover, the board believes that RSU 26 is a district full of talented and caring people that can accomplish much when we all work together. We feel that systemic racism in our country is a pressing issue needing this kind of focused, collaborative attention as a district.

Towards this end, the board reiterates our strong commitment to enforcement of existing policies prohibiting discrimination (AC policies) against students, employees and community members. However, we also recognize that no institution is perfect and every institution has room for improvement. Towards this end, the board embraces its role as leaders of the district in listening and learning about areas needing improvement. We further commit to take actions on what is learned, including updating policies and ensuring suitable staff training as necessary where policies are not working.

The board also recognizes that racial and economic injustice are intertwined, and recommits to delivering maximal economic opportunities to all of our students through an excellent education directed toward individual needs and supported by food security, technology access, and other necessary prerequisites for education.

The board additionally recognizes that as an educational institution we have an important role in preparing future generations to be civically engaged adults. To this end, it is important to teach our full history as a nation, including our failures to live up to our founding ideals and how those failures continue into the present day. We also emphasize teaching students how they can participate in improving our country going forward.

The board encourages ongoing discussion within its students, staff and community on this topic and specifically welcomes further feedback to the board on areas where the board or the district can improve.