

SHAMONG TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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June 3, 2020

Dear Shamong School District Community:

The unnecessary and tragic death of Mr. George Floyd continues to cause sadness, disbelief, confusion, and anger throughout the world. Sadly, our children are watching these tragic events unfold and are closely watching the reactions of adults on the internet, television and in our local communities. Regardless of the age of a child, it is important to balance the existence of racism, unfairness, lack of tolerance and inequities with the possibility of change and hope.

The New Jersey Education Association recently stated, "As educators, we bear a great responsibility for shaping society. We have the unique privilege of working with children and young people as they are forming their values and world view. We also have the great responsibility of responding with compassion, courage and conviction as they witness history in real time, as they have been this past week. And more importantly yet, we have a duty and responsibility to work for a better, fairer and more just world for our students to inherit from us."

In Shamong Schools, we pride ourselves on being a welcoming, accepting and inclusive environment. Our schools focus on delivering an education based on the pillars of respect, empathy, responsibility, trustworthiness, citizenship and fairness with lessons that model acceptance and tolerance. We remain committed to developing and delivering lessons that will support the social and emotional needs of all children we serve.

It is expected that our children will have questions and comments regarding the happenings over the past few weeks. Honest, age-appropriate explanations and answers are important. Included below are links to resources that can assist with starting conversations and answering questions with your children.

- [How to talk to kids about race and racism, according to experts](#) From: The Parent Toolkit
- [Talking to Children About Racial Bias](#) From: Healthy Children.org
- [Talking to children after racial incidents | Penn GSE](#) From: Penn University/ Graduate School of Education

Should you or your child need assistance or require further information, please reach out to me, your child's principal or a school counselor. We are ready and available to assist you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Vespe".

Dr. Christine Vespe, Superintendent
Shamong School District