

June 9, 2020

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**Rigor, Intellectual  
Engagement  
Success in College &  
Careers  
Excellence in Teaching &  
Learning  
R.I.S.E.**

**Community School  
District 17**

1224 Park Pl, Room 130  
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Dear Community School District 17,

*"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

As a district, we are deeply disturbed by the egregious events that have precipitated the national protests in over 140 cities against racism and police brutality. Specifically, the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery along with countless others before them - are senseless and inhumane. We cannot sit back and tolerate these types of injustices. The endless news about discrimination, police brutality, and violence against people of color is a reflection of the deep-seated racism that we must confront in this country. Racism is a problem for ALL of us. We all have witnessed the countless murders of unarmed Black people at the hands of police in this country. In addition to the killings that have occurred, systemic racism has long plagued our society. Racism has long plagued our community and must be confronted head-on.

We want to make it clear that we are against racism and are in favor of upstanding, peaceful, and fair police practices within our communities.

Since I started as Superintendent of District 17 in 2014, my team and I have relentlessly focused on addressing issues of systemic racism and disproportionality. As a result of this focus, we have experienced significant gains in both English Language Arts and Mathematics proficiency, improving our citywide rank from 29th out of 32 community school districts, to 17th. Community School District 17's has ensured equity teams exist in each school to empower our students.

As educators, we continue to promote access and equity by the following:

- Having an ongoing dialogue with our school leaders to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and representative of ALL the populations we serve as a district.
- Holding space with families and community organizations for the continuous dialogue of issues that impact our community to develop solutions for ensuring respect for all.
- Continuing to take steps in closing the achievement and opportunity gap.

The New York City Department of Education has taken specific steps to counter this ongoing issue of the marginalization of people of color through releasing materials for educators to embed in their instruction that speaks to race relations and tolerance. District 17 has worked to bring awareness to implicit biases, and engaging students in intentionally speaking to their authentic feelings surrounding the ongoing issues affecting their communities.

Our Chancellor, Richard Carranza, has released an official letter to families on the recent events unfolding and ways in which the New York City Department of Education is standing in solidarity against racism. We encourage families to visit the

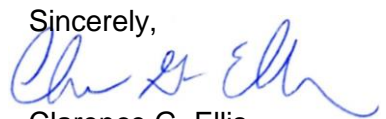


link below, which will take you to the Chancellor's letter with a list of resources to help promote meaningful discussions with your children about this topic.  
[Resources for Families | Together for Justice | schools.nyc.gov](https://schools.nyc.gov/resources-for-families-together-for-justice)

**Clarence G. Ellis**  
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We will continue to keep this critical work at the forefront of our agenda, as we plan for the present, the upcoming school year, and beyond. School District 17 will continue to "Rise" for families.

**Shenean N. Lindsay**  
Deputy Superintendent  
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Sincerely,  
  
Clarence G. Ellis  
Community Superintendent  
District 17

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