



Bowie Vertical Team

June 11, 2020

Dear Bowie Vertical Team Community,

The recent events surrounding the tragic death of George Floyd and others, and the subsequent local, nationwide, and worldwide protests against police brutality and systemic racism have touched us all. Chilling examples of the painful injustices that continue to occur in Austin, and throughout the country are, once again, thrust into the light. Our students have not been immune to the news coverage of these events, and they are likely more aware than we know. The Bowie Vertical Team recognizes the need for our schools to renew our commitment to calling out and condemning racism and discrimination against anyone, and helping our students and staff to understand racism and its negative impacts on our society through education and professional development.

The Southwest Austin community has always stood together and supported one another and we must rely on that solidarity now. It is important that we commit to listening, talking about, and learning about these issues openly and honestly. The recent events have highlighted even more our collective need to be an inclusive and caring community, where all people are heard, celebrated, honored, and respected.

We hold our students, our school families, and our larger community in our hearts. As a vertical team, from Pre-K through twelfth grade, we pledge to continue our work to grow our own cultural proficiency and to become more than just welcoming spaces, but schools that are united against hate, racism, and discrimination. As vertical team leaders, we've collaborated to identify the following action steps for our Campus Improvement Plans that will move this work forward on each of our campuses:

- We are committed to vertically aligning our professional development & learning on equity, cultural proficiency, and inclusiveness for faculty and staff in every Bowie Vertical Team school.
- We are committed to providing resource materials for our students and families to extend education and learning opportunities.
- We are committed to having courageous conversations with our school community.
- We are committed to ongoing dialogue with all students about race, racism, discrimination, and equity through our SEL and core content curriculum.
- We are committed to providing instructional materials that represent diverse perspectives, cultures, and histories in all content areas throughout the entire school year and not just during designated months.

As much as we, the adults, sometimes struggle to make sense of what is happening, we know our students may not understand their world right now and we wanted to provide you the following resources you can use to talk with your child:

- [How to talk to kids about racism, racial violence and police brutality](#)
- [How to talk to kids about racism, protest and injustice](#)
- [Talking to Kids About Race](#)
- [How White Parents Can Talk About Race](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources](#)

If you would like to support local organizations working against racism and supporting the Black Lives Matter community, you can learn about five of those organizations here in Austin: [Donate to these Five Austin Organizations Promoting Racial Equity](#)

The Bowie Vertical Team is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of our schools. We stand firm on ensuring every student has access to individualized learning and support so they can succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. As leaders, we are committed to professional learning that will nurture school environments that welcome and celebrate multiple perspectives. This is ongoing work and each campus principal will work with their staff over the summer to develop plans for full implementation of each of the action steps outlined above.

All families deserve to raise their children in a community and world that is free of racism, discrimination, and violence. We will be an even stronger community by working together, with purpose, empathy, and respect, united in our vision for our students.

Together as the Bowie Vertical Team Principals,

Mark Robinson
Bowie High School

John Rocha
Bailey Middle School

Cathryn Mitchell
Gorzycki Middle School

Jennifer Murray
Baldwin Elementary School

Beth Cantu
Baranoff Elementary School

David Crissy
Bear Creek Elementary

Amy Gonzales
Clayton Elementary School

Travis Brunner
Cowan Elementary School

Lalla Beachum
Mills Elementary School

Cory Matheny and Alma Chapa Moore
Kiker Elementary School