



# Children's Community School

31 Wolcott Street • P.O. Box 1746 Waterbury, CT 06721 • (203) 575-0659 • [www.ccswaterbury.org](http://www.ccswaterbury.org)

June 7, 2020

Dear CCS Community --

I am humbled to speak on behalf of Children's Community School and make this statement: as a community, we wholeheartedly condemn the ongoing, systemic racism that manifests itself in our nation's educational system, justice system, and virtually every other aspect of society. For centuries, Black men, women, and children have been subject to injustices that have long suffocated their culture and been the source of deadly oppression. The violence -- both literal and figurative -- against Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color must stop.

As our world swells with unrest and continues to wrestle with the realities of a pandemic, it is important to pause for a minute to examine what we believe. In light of the senseless killing of George Floyd, who is tragically only one of far too many, CCS acknowledges that, among other things, we believe this:

- Black lives matter, and we stand arm-in-arm with our students and families. We support those whose collective voice seeks to bring about change both locally and nationally.
- Education is essential to combating racial injustice, and we reaffirm our commitment to providing our students with the best possible education. In the words of the late Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

For the past 50 years, Children's Community School has existed in Waterbury for the purpose of educating Waterbury children and providing them with learning experiences we hope will arm them for being the changemakers this world needs. While we honor our history as an institution, we also know that there is more that we can learn and ways that we can grow in order to reflect a greater understanding and commitment to our community. As we move ahead in the future, we make these commitments:

- At all levels of our organization, from the Board of Directors to our faculty & staff and to our student population, we will ensure that our school is diverse and reflective of our broader community.
- We will regularly examine the learning experiences and materials we use in our classrooms to ensure that our students see themselves, and their lived experiences, as highly valuable, and they will know that school is a place where they undoubtedly belong and can feel safe.
- Faculty and staff will continue to ensure that the quality of instruction is excellent, and we will engage in professional development, dialogue, and discussion on topics pertaining to cultural competency/humility, educational equity, and trauma-informed practice.
- Opportunities for dialogue and discussion on vital, yet difficult topics, including racial inequities, will take place and be made available for the entire community, including students, families, employees, volunteers, and our Board of Directors.

Only about 25 years ago, I had the personal experience in my hometown of Springfield, Illinois where I was bussed across the entire city in an effort to desegregate the city's schools. I am grateful for how this and other experiences as a child and adult have influenced my beliefs and understanding. I would be remiss, however, if I did not acknowledge the undue privilege afforded me as a White man. I realize that my experience and understanding is inherently limited on the basis of my own race and my own experiences. That being said, I am eager to learn and understand to the greatest extent possible, and I make these personal commitments to our community:

- I will do my best to ensure that I am well informed about events and issues that are pertinent to members of our school community.
- I will actively engage in personal and professional work that helps to increase my own awareness about my biases, and seeks to build a broader and more holistic understanding of race dynamics.
- I will make myself available to members of the community to engage in dialogue about challenging and sensitive topics in the interest of supporting and edifying our community.

At Children's Community School, we strive to help each student in our care to know that she or he is inherently valuable. We want our families, teachers and staff, volunteers, supporters, and Board of Directors to know that we feel the same way. I am reminded of a quote from Eboo Patel's book *Sacred Ground*, in which he says, "People whose nation gives them dignity will build up that society." Children's Community School is a place where our students, their families, and all within our community can expect dignity, honor, respect, and compassion.

The tragic events of racial violence and unrest over recent weeks, months, years, decades, and centuries have impacted all of us. By making clear where we stand and by affirming our commitments, we take a small step towards a more just, peaceful, and equitable community. It is the first step of many, and my hope is that we take more steps together, arm-in-arm, to fight against racism and injustice.

Humbly, respectfully, and in solidarity,

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

Jeff Martin  
*Executive Director*  
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