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Every Child, Every Day,  
Whatever it Takes

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June 1, 2020

Lincoln School Norms and Values

*Our words and actions matter.*

*We are responsible for ourselves and each other.*

*We work to repair our relationships when we cause harm.*

Dear Lincoln Community,

I have been writing to you throughout the weekend, trying to hold onto my thoughts to share with you. I left the rally at ETHS today with a sense of awe and action, knowing that the event, drawing 10,000 people from march to rally, was organized by recent graduates.

Again and again, our youth end up leading us when we are faced with the ugliness of systemic, ongoing racism. I had to stop myself because it can be easy in a moment of awe to feel a relief and a hope that the kids are doing something that needs to be done, and we are going to move into a less racist world because of their vision and leadership. I am an adult, we are adults and this needs to sit on my shoulders, as a parent, a principal and a member of this community. I am grateful for the work of our youth, but I cannot look to them to do this for us. This is our fight together.

We often have the greatest moments of struggle within our community when we work to center learning and action that is not rooted in whiteness. We need to help our children understand the realities of what has happened to George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor.

We need to show them that we can recognize the bias within ourselves and our institutions, and we cannot notice these and let them pass by. I ask that you hold me accountable to lead a school that is anti-racist in its teaching, its routines, its engagement. We need to do more and we need to do a better job, together.

We often get questions about discussions of violence when we teach and talk about Black Lives Matter Week in Schools. We cannot and will not share part of the story without sharing an honest perspective on the microaggressions and aggressions that our Black and LatinX community members have had to and continue to have to endure. This is not only systemic in a way that is out there, this is here in our systems. Every day. We need to talk to our children and grow with our children. I cannot stop at the conversation. I promise to do more. To support and encourage you to engage in these conversations, I am sharing one [resource](#) of many.

To our Black and LatinX students and families I want you to know that I see you and I want to listen. I promise to live by our anti-racist policy. I stand with Dr. Horton and I look forward to working under his leadership.

**Michelle Cooney**  
Principal

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I included our norms and values at the top of my letter. One of the speakers today asked the crowd to be responsible for her. She said that we should all hold a responsibility for one another. I am likely not capturing her words exactly, but my mind went straight to our norms and values at Lincoln. 'We are responsible for ourselves and each other.' We can grow in this fight against racism together. We can grow our connectedness to one another and our children's connectedness within the communities of Lincoln and the community beyond our school 'walls'.

Our connections over the past two months have continued to grow and deepen, and this truly gives me hope.

In unity,

Michelle Cooney  
Principal  
Services

Luke Larmee  
Assistant Principal

Dr. Emily Chambers  
Asst Principal for Special

"One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of "not racist." The claim of "not racist" neutrality is a mask for racism."

Ibram X. Kendi

**Lincoln School in partnership with its diverse families and community will provide rigorous learning experiences, collaboration and critical thinking in a safe, supportive, inclusive, and equitable environment to empower and develop a lifelong love of learning.**

**Michelle Cooney**  
Principal

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