

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
THOMAS EDISON HIGH SCHOOL
151 WEST LUZERNE STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19140
Awilda Ortíz, Principal

June 8, 2020

Greetings EHS Families,

We hope this letter finds you well especially during these past few months and the most recent difficult days. The recent events over the past few weeks have been taxing. Our community continues to struggle and experience a collective pain. COVID-19 has robbed the lives of the black and brown communities above all other communities. And now, as it has been for centuries, the total disregard of the lives of our men, this time, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd and our women, this time, Breonna Taylor not to mention the racist antics of the Central Park dog walker, Amy Cooper, has fueled the rage of a nation. The story of this unrest is not the broken windows. We cannot and will not be distracted from the root cause, from the cries of pain.

The story of this moment is the story of every micro and macro aggression that people of color endure each day. It is a systemic disinvestment from public education--but not in wealthy, white areas. It is the lack of affordable housing. It is the hedge funds and healthcare systems robbing people of their fair share every single day. It is the uprising of a collective consciousness and of a rebellious unapologetic demand for better for people of color in our society. For decades, our students have been robbed of their constitutional right to a thorough and efficient public education system. We have taken our fight to the ballot box, to the streets, and to the courts. But still, for far too many across the country, the promise of a societal and education system that recognizes their inherent value as a human being goes unrealized.

As a Puerto Rican woman, principal and mother of brown children, I am struggling to process the acts of racist violence I have recently witnessed. As a leader of color in one of the most diverse schools in the city of Philadelphia, I remain grounded in social justice acts for the communities we serve. As we move forward, our team is committed to practicing the 3Ps and an A (Pause, Paraphrase, Probe and Acknowledge) of cultural proficiency.

It is not just Mr. Floyd's death that angers me. The incident with the woman in Central Park using her privilege and power to weaponize her words on the 911 call, which could have easily led to police confronting Christian Cooper. As James Baldwin said, "Whatever white people do not know about negroes reveals precisely and inexorably what they do not know

about themselves.” What was it about Aubrey, Cooper, and Floyd they did not know? Where was their humanity?

This collective national rage is the culmination of years of anger and frustration at a system that continues to perpetuate educational, economic, political and social inequities on people of color. We have a fundamental responsibility to recognize the systems that perpetuate the dehumanization of our students and communities. While recognizing all these things, as a community, we are all in this together and I stand with you and for you.

At Edison, we stand committed to our shared belief that there is no place for hate. We embrace students of ALL races, ethnicities and nationalities. Students of ALL religions and languages. Students of ALL genders, gender identities and preference. Students of ALL family structures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Students of ALL abilities and interests. Students of ALL styles and body types. Our students and families deserve a world that sees each of them as worthy, where each feels welcome, safe, seen, valued, and supported. As a result, as adults, we must educate ourselves about race, diversity, equity, and inclusion and model the type of discourse that we want to see from our children. Many of us may not know how to have these conversations and that is also okay; however, it is important that we try, no matter how uncomfortable and difficult it may be. Rest assured that we have begun to have anti-racist conversations with our teachers, and we will continue to have open dialogue, facilitate professional learning, and provide resources that can be used for these purposes, which will help us in developing new awareness (or reinforcing current ones) that will help in building relationships with everyone in our school community and bring about cultural and behavioral change.

We will host a student forum Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 11am. Students can join via Google Meet meet.google.com/uqw-ukmf-bmn.

Below are some resources that may help you in your conversations with your children.

Talking to your children about race:

- National Geographic: Talking to Kids about Race [Family]
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/in-the-news/talking-about-race/>
- Parent Toolkit: How to Talk to Kids about Race and Racism [Family]
<https://www.parenttoolkit.com/social-and-emotional-development/advice/social-awareness/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-and-racism>
- NPR: Talking Race with Young Children [Family]
<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/24/716700866/talking-race-with-young-children>

- Are Your Kids Too Young To Talk About Race? **[Family]** <https://www.prettygooddesign.org/>
- Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent’s Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice (Southern Poverty Law Center) **[Family]**
https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/beyond_golden_rule.pdf
- Preparing Young Children for the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities into the Classroom (National Association for the Education of Young Children) **[Family]**
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/preparing-young-children-inclusion>
- Resources for Talking about Race, Racism and Racialized Violence with Kids (Center for Racial Justice Education) **[Family]**
<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>
- Social Justice (National Association of School Psychologists) **[Family]**
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice>
- Talking to Kids about Discrimination (American Psychological Association) **[Family]**
<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination>
- Understanding Child Trauma **[Family]**
<https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>
- Age-related Reactions to a Traumatic Event **[Family]**
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/age-related-reactions-traumatic-event>
- Community Violence: Reactions and Actions in Dangerous Times **[Family]**
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/community-violence-reactions-and-actions-dangerous-times>
- Helping Youth After Community Trauma: Tips for Educators **[Family]**
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/tip-sheet/helping_youth_after_community_trauma_for_educators_final_explosions.pdf

Reading for Children:

- National Council of Teachers of English: Build Your Stack – Affirming Black Boys Outside the Context of Police Brutality
<https://ncte.org/blog/2020/05/build-stack-affirming-black-boys-outside-context-police-brutality/?fbclid=IwAR0AEY5vIEzBX8Jck3luBifVdcxJM2KgBXtNbSHOD1JkNhgDqN4CA44cCGk>
- Embrace Race: 31 Children’s Books to Support Conversations of Race, Racism and Resistance
<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/26-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-resistance>

School counselors and social workers are available via their email addresses and will respond to students and families who reach out. Families can also receive free support from the Philly HopeLine by calling or texting 833-Phil-HOPE (833-745-4673). Through it all, remember to take care of yourselves, your families, your hearts and your minds.

Together we stand en la lucha!

Principal Ortiz/Proud Principal- Edison HS

Additional Information

Listed below is important information and updates regarding (1) 2019-2020 Final Report Cards; (2) Chromebook collection; (3) Virtual Teaching and Learning.

1. 2019-2020 Final Report Cards

We are excited to announce that we will be sharing all students' 2019-2020 Final Report Cards through the Parent & Family Portal! This means that:

- Students will be able to access their own report cards through the Student Portal.
- Parents/Guardians will be able to access their students' report cards through the Parent & Family Portal.

Steppers outlining how students and parents/guardians can sign up for the Parent & Family Portal and will be able to access report cards are available at www.philasd.org/pfportal.

- [How to register video](#)
- [How to register Instructions](#)
- [How to use](#)
- [Parent and Family Portal FAQs](#)
- [Student Portal Report Card Stepper](#)
- [Parent & Family Portal Report Card Stepper](#)

Report cards will be made available through the Parent & Family Portal per the following schedule:

- Students in Grades 9-12: 9:00 am on Monday, June 15
- Students in Grades K-8: 9:00 am on Tuesday, June 16

Note. Report cards will also be mailed home to families, based on the primary address in the SIS.

2. Collection of Chromebooks

Below is the guidance for reclaiming the Chromebooks from students including seniors and students transferring out of District. Students who are transferring to a new District school in the fall, should bring the loaner Chromebook to their new school.

- **Returning Kindergarten through Grade 11 Students:** Students who are returning to the District in the fall will keep the chromebook through the summer. [Please review this letter from the Chief of Schools.](#)
- **12th Grade Students Graduating on Time:** 12th grade students that have received confirmation that they are graduating on time should return their Chromebooks to the Education Center, 440 N. Broad Street or the Fitzpatrick Annex located at the rear of Fitzpatrick School at 4101 Chalfont Drive, Philadelphia PA 19154, Monday or Wednesdays, through August 19, 2020 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm except on July 6-9, 2020.
- **12th Grade Students Not Graduating on Time:** 12th grade students that have been notified that they have to attend Summer Programs are permitted to keep this chromebook through the end of that Summer Program. [Please review this letter from the Chief of Schools.](#) Once students have completed the summer program, they should return the Chromebook to the Education Center, 440 N. Broad Street or the Fitzpatrick Annex located at the rear of Fitzpatrick School, 4101 Chalfont Drive, Philadelphia PA 19154. Monday or Wednesdays, through August 19, 2020 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm except on July 6-9, 2020.
- **Students Transferring Out of The School District of Philadelphia:** Any student who is transferring out of the District must bring the Chrombooks to 440 N. Broad Street or the Fitzpatrick Annex, located at the rear of the Fitzpatrick School, 4101 Chalfont Drive, Philadelphia PA 19154, Monday or Wednesdays, through August 19, 2020 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm except on July 6-9, 2020.

Please note that all Chromebooks are linked by serial number to each student's online record. If the Chromebooks are returned to Laptop Dropoff Centers, staff will note the return in the technology tab in the SIS.

3. Virtual Teaching and Learning

- **Summer Access to Digital Materials**

- Student Passwords: Students in Kindergarten-Grade 5 will keep the same passwords for the 2020-2021 school year. No password changes will occur in August. Students in Grades 6-12 will still have the ability to reset their passwords whenever needed therefore there is no yearly update of passwords.

- **Online Textbooks and Online Adaptive Programs**

- Student and staff access to online textbooks and interventions for the 2019-2020 school year will be frozen as they appear on Tuesday, June 9, and will remain available until Friday, July 31. Vendors will then begin setting up for the 20-21 school year in August. Access to online textbooks for the 2020-2021 school year will be completed by Monday, August 31. Access to online programs purchased prior to June 12, 2020 will be set up by August 31.

- **Google Classroom**

- District-managed Google Classrooms for 2019-2020 school year courses will remain active until Friday, August 7, then they will be moved to the list of archived classes. Any Google Classrooms created by a teacher will remain untouched. Google Classrooms for 20-21 school year High School courses will be created by Monday, August 24. Creating the District Managed Google Classrooms depends on completed student schedules/ rosters.