

In This Issue:

June 2020
Message
from David W. James

Quick Links:

[APS News](#)
[APS Calendar](#)
[CLCs Project](#)

APS: To Students, Staff and Community

Many words come to mind in describing the events over the last two months and recent weeks right here in Akron and across the country. Every generation faces challenges. I think back to my grandparents who were married in 1917 and raised nine children. During their lives, they experienced the changes to our society that many of my fellow African American families experienced.



They were limited to where they could buy a home because of redlining, limited to the types of jobs they could get, limited to educational opportunities and so on. The social unrest of the 1960s brought to light for the entire world the unequal treatment of African Americans that we know all too well. The promises of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his message of equity and racial justice gave an entire generation hope, but for many that all ended on April 4, 1968. At that time, many of our major cities underwent conflagrations which rendered many city neighborhoods shells of their former selves. To this very day, many of those neighborhoods that burned decades ago have not fully returned to their former glory.

So today, it appears that we have not progressed as far as many have hoped for. Many of us are still separated by race and socio-economics in terms of where our children attend school and where we live, shop and play. While an education is the cornerstone for building a better life, issues around race and socio-economics still do not allow our children to start their life's journey on equal footing. All of us have the responsibility to ensure that our brothers and sisters have a fair chance of achieving the American dream. No one, regardless of their background, should be targeted for unfair treatment no matter the situation. As a society, all citizens should demand equity and justice for everyone, period.

As many of us watched in horror the senseless death of George Floyd, those nearly nine minutes of agony will never leave my mind. Too many times we have seen overwhelming and violent responses to issues that should not escalate to the point of causing physical harm and/or death. We should all pause and reflect on how these events are impacting our children and their development. I am very concerned about the future of our youngest. We have to be very careful how we speak to all of our children about this and other similar issues. As parents, it is our responsibility to instill compassion and

understanding in our children, regardless of their race or beliefs.

The images broadcast over the last week are a dichotomy. Groups of citizens are protesting attacks on their civil liberties, something that goes back to the founding of this country. On the other hand, authorities are responding with force against people who have the right to peaceful assembly. While there are always antagonists and those who take advantage of crises, the majority of those protesting the treatment of George Floyd and racial injustice have done so with righteous indignation. This situation has been simmering since before 1776, and it is about time that all of us demand real change.

So, as we head into a summer break, as a community, please be mindful of your role in the lives of all children around you, especially during this very uncertain time. You can and will make a difference, one child at a time. I would like to leave you with a few words from civil rights icon Rosa Parks from a comment she made in 1998 at Howard University. "Racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome."

Best Wishes,



David W. James, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Akron Public Schools

