June 5, 2020

Dear Manitou Springs School District 14 Community,

I have started five different versions of this letter. This has truly been a difficult one for me to find the words to communicate the thoughts, emotions, and experiences surrounding the tragic death of George Floyd and the nation’s mixed response to this event.

The intent of this letter is not to communicate a political ideology or to pass judgment. In fact, my only intention is to let the community know that Manitou Springs School District (MSSD) will create meaningful ways for dialogue and educational opportunities that allow us to better understand systems of discrimination, harassment, exclusion, low expectations, or hostility. As an educator and the Superintendent of Schools for Manitou Springs School District 14, I can wholeheartedly say that there is no place for these types of behaviors and this cannot be the narrative for our students, staff, or families. The elimination of these practices do not happen just with words; they must be woven into the fabric of our actions, behaviors, and decision-making practices.

The Board of Education and I are fully committed to living our Core Values of Relationships, Deep Learning, and Opportunity, which are grounded in the belief that high-quality education for every student is essential and that education is the great equalizer, especially as we navigate and build systems that are focused on eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps.

This school year has been wrought with change. As a district, we are committed to:

- Creating meaningful professional development opportunities in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion while also advancing our Core Values and focusing on the Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community.
- Supporting and encouraging students in ways that allow them to pursue their dreams and aspirations and to learn in safe and inclusive spaces where their voices are honored and valued.
- Engage families in meaningful ways to continuously be involved through all stages of their child’s life. We know families desire this opportunity. We want to make sure collaboration and partnership are encouraged and cultivated.
- Create opportunities and dialogue for the larger community to be a part of addressing systemic discrimination and the ultimate success of our students.

Manitou Springs School District 14 has all the right pieces, parts, places, and, most importantly, people to accomplish this great responsibility of creating learning environments that promote and celebrate achievement, diversity, inclusion, creativity, and opportunity for all.

Relationships ● Deep Learning ● Opportunity
We will continue to provide updates and opportunities for us to grow through this important moment in history. Additionally, the Board of Education will be engaging in a critical dialogue during the June 15, 2020 Regular Meeting (at 6:30). This meeting will be live-streamed at: https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/2542e7ad-2146-495a-b82d-75d94b9a43f1. We hope you will join us.

With deep care,

Elizabeth A. Domangue, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Tina Vidovich, President
    Natalie Johnson, Vice President
    Dr. Jack Sharon, Treasurer
    Gustav Moen, Director
    Gary Smith, Director

CORE VALUES

Relationships:
We value authentic connections grounded in trust and respect between ALL people.

Deep Learning:
Our community practices: dynamic, divergent, critical, and global thinking.

  We challenge each learner to master, transfer, and apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for success.

Opportunity:
We provide accessible and engaging opportunities for purposeful growth and visionary learning.

Relationships • Deep Learning • Opportunity