

ERVING SCHOOL UNION #28
ERVING, LEVERETT, NEW SALEM, WENDELL, SHUTESBURY

JENNIFER J CULKEEN
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

PRUDENCE MARSH, Ed.D.
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

BRUCE C. TURNER
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

18 PLEASANT STREET
ERVING, MA 01344
413 423-3337
FAX 413 423-3236
www.union28.org

June 3, 2020

Dear Union 28 Community,

Silence is the voice of the oppressor. Our current times press us to make clear our values and join forces with those that stand against discrimination. As a school system, we are a small representation of our larger society. If they are not acknowledged, injustices that exist outside our school communities live and are reborn within our walls. As a collective leadership team, Union 28 will not accept the perpetuation of the status quo, and we will seek to grow in our understanding and confrontation of passive and active racism, sexism, classism, heteronormativity, ableism, and any other bias that holds one group in higher power than another. We stand with community action groups that are working to end discriminatory systems of power, and we promise to continue our personal and community journey towards a more just world, especially when it becomes difficult to do so.

In our experience, we have come to understand that children are fully able to participate in conversations about equality, equity, and social justice. In fact, they are eager to do so. We encourage you to have conversations about these deeply rooted issues in American history, to ask open questions and to listen to your children's thoughts and feelings. Please find the following list of resources to lead conversations with your children about social justice issues.

We look forward to connecting both within our individual school communities and our larger Union 28 community for education and activism.

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” -
Desmond Tutu

In solidarity,

Union 28 Leadership
Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent
Prudence Marsh, Director of Student Support Services
Annie Foley Ruiz, Director of Learning Design
Lisa Candito, Principal Erving Elementary School
Rhonda Cohen, Principal Leverett Elementary School
Jackie Mendonsa, Principal Shutesbury Elementary School
Kelley Sullivan, Principal Swift River School
Gillian Budine, Director Community Network for Children
Bruce Turner, Director of Finance

Erving School Union #28 assures that all programs, activities and employment opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, gender, gender identity, age, creed, homelessness, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability and pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions.

Resources

Your Kids Are Not Too Young To Talk About Race, Resource Round Up

<https://www.prettygooddesign.org/blog/Blog%20Post%20Title%20One-5new4?fbclid=IwAR1k6XAaB0pGP9ac3KKuI7qYMshgpI2vdF01GODt3Tcr0kfJZprgVFtiwo>

Embrace Race

Local Parent Collective with webinars and other excellent resources

<https://www.embracerace.org/>

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/26-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-resistance>

This Book is Antiracist by Local Author Tiffany Jewell https://bookshop.org/books/this-book-is-anti-racist-20-lessons-on-how-to-wake-up-take-action-and-do-the-work/9780711245211?fbclid=IwAR16WSlvxfUtdmN2IRCQa09_xkZvyUgvmGkxqZUthzPyt86bZk72NmH_X2A

100 Race-Conscious Things You Can Say to Your Child to Advance Racial Justice

[http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-](http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-justice/?fbclid=IwAR3geAlFqezXtZtzJ81Bj3bc66nsoxSvglmz1ghWKtOnmGCKEo352SM5_UcI)

[justice/?fbclid=IwAR3geAlFqezXtZtzJ81Bj3bc66nsoxSvglmz1ghWKtOnmGCKEo352SM5_UcI](http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-justice/?fbclid=IwAR3geAlFqezXtZtzJ81Bj3bc66nsoxSvglmz1ghWKtOnmGCKEo352SM5_UcI)

Teachers Must Hold Themselves Accountable for Dismantling Racial Oppression, Education Post article

<https://educationpost.org/teachers-must-hold-themselves-accountable-for-dismantling-racial-oppression/?fbclid=IwAR0owyYOYZUypYSDk1cNmNXX57yPbQUtX-lOeL2Bz2vSo9ZovARFvBYn7Pk>

75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice by Connie Shatuck

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>

A Kids Book About Racism <https://akidsbookabout.com/products/a-kids-book-about-racism>

Tip Sheet and a Grief Out Loud episode on Supporting Children & Teens Grieving a Violent Death:

https://www.dougy.org/docs/TDC_Murder_or_Violent_Death_Tip_Sheet_2018.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ZkO4X7ss6tmTG1WFvM4uOU0XS5Pm-5x1Ua4Ta6DuTBJcKwUD2Vf7ipvI

https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/4493688?fbclid=IwAR2zu7rUydPjXjA3UbKjY0U3uuobfunEBYSJkq_S01IzxntTk9eHQASsoUc

Workbook for children grieving a violent death:

https://www.tdcbookstore.org/store/p13/After_a_Murder%3A_A_Workbook_for_Grieving_Kids_Item_%23558.html?fbclid=IwAR2RueCCVSxrHZH7gjUQN6YQ2jAY29-OOGK2eu4N08XMA2LaKmrTSS-IJZ0

To listen to the Grief Out Loud Podcast Episode 142: Supporting Black Youth & Suffocated Grief with Dr. Tashel Bordere follow this link:

https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/13936736?fbclid=IwAR19yfurlbZpZUqrqPXxp9hmuNS8EIZ-5jPKjQRY_sao8ghPGGVyETYMi4w

For information from Dougy on talking with children about tragic events:

https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/talking-with-children-about-tragic-events/?fbclid=IwAR34kJ_5i8SQBzA3SshU2jDGBxBvhhEnc0dQbqfGX4VcFh7n67qnbiNzbW

https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/dear-lily-a-letter-to-a-12-year-old-in-response-to-americas-most-recent-tra/?fbclid=IwAR1KiZ1i3tOD--JCd1Vs5ulqb4Nzrae-zxM_UVE9OzTEC2OgaJAbEVrK8Vo

To learn more about The Dougy Center's commitment to Equity & Inclusion see the statement here:

https://www.dougy.org/docs/TDC_DEI_stmt_042418.pdf