



June 10, 2020

The North Carolina Governor's School community is in pain.

We are shocked and outraged by the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor. All three are tragic additions to a list of names that was already horrifyingly long, a list of Black people and other people of color who lost their lives to the brutality of the police who were supposed to protect them, or died at the hands of their fellow citizens who denied them their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Others in our nation are not denied these rights because they are White. This is not merely our observation through the media; members of our own Governor's School community have directly experienced this discrimination and violation of basic human rights in our daily lives.

We stand in solidarity with all victims of police brutality and hate crimes, and we reject the systems of oppression in our country that condemn and disenfranchise people of color. Centuries of pain have left a stain of racism on our society that will not be cleansed easily. It is our belief that with collective action, America can live up to its ideals for all its people. To begin that work, we challenge ourselves and the broader community to:

- **Speak** loudly and boldly against racism, becoming anti-racist, not just non-racist. Silence is not acceptable;
- **Listen to and honor** the stories and perspectives of people of color and recognize that these experiences are fundamentally different from those of White Americans;
- **Learn** about the history, challenges, and contributions of people of color in America, and do so by seeking out this knowledge, not idly waiting and expecting people of color to be the teacher; and
- **Engage** in honest dialogue and difficult conversations that promote meaningful changes within ourselves and others.

As it relates specifically to Governor's School, we will seek to:

- **Build** awareness among people of color about Governor's School resulting in increased interest and nominations at the school and county level;
- **Increase** the diversity in our student body, staff, and faculty, furthering the variety of experiences and voices in our classrooms;
- **Redouble** our efforts to identify and attract leaders of color on our own boards and throughout the Governor's School community;
- **Integrate** the events of 2020 into conversations that will challenge the class of 2021 to reflect and evaluate how they interact with each other and the world; and
- **Ensure** that all members of the Governor's School community — students, faculty, and staff — are heard and valued, and that all qualified students have access to the Governor's School experience, regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

For some students, Governor's School was their first opportunity to be part of a racially diverse educational community. Generations of alumni treasure their Governor's School experience in large part because the community exposed them to

substantially different viewpoints and experiences, challenged them to understand one another better, and grow into more thoughtful citizens. To move our society towards a nation where there is truly liberty and justice for all, we must deepen our understanding of different lived experiences, something best done by leaning into Governor's School's history of never shying away from difficult conversations, including conversations that force us to acknowledge times when we failed to live up to our ideals and caused pain. We welcome those conversations and promise they will be catalysts for improving the Governor's School experience.

To the entire Governor's School community, especially members of the Black community struggling with recent events: utilize your Governor's School network for support. Draw on the lessons you learned and the friendships you made when you were first examining concepts such as justice and morality within the safe confines of your Area II and Area III classes, and remember the profound impact of listening to and learning from each other in those formative discussions.

As we make the commitments outlined above, we ask you to commit with us as a community and hold one another accountable. We welcome you to reach out and share your ideas about how the Governor's School can better serve all the people of North Carolina.

**The NC Governor's School Board of Governors
&
The NC Governor's School Foundation**