

February 2021

### **Guidance Document: Chauvin Trial**

Below are some talking points for helping our students process the upcoming trial of former Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. As most people know, George Floyd, a Black man, died on May 25, 2020 after Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck while he was handcuffed face down on the street. The death of George Floyd was followed by a community, national and worldwide response shedding light on racism, its effects and police violence.

As this case begins on March 8, 2021 It's important that we create space and show up for our students in any way they need us to. We should not be afraid of antiracist conversations in our schools. This also connects to our recent CRCT Training focus; The Cost of Silence. We cannot be silent. Schools must be antiracist. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi (author of How to Be an Antiracist) says, "I define an antiracist as someone who is expressing an antiracist idea or supporting an antiracist policy with their actions, and I define an antiracist idea as any idea that says the racial groups are equal."

**BIPoC educators:** We hope that you have time and space to care for yourselves, as you support your students. You have colleagues at RAS who are talking about this, too. We hope that you can find support here.

### **On March 15 (since March 8 will land on spring break) & March 8 for Harambee**

- The expectation is that we as staff acknowledge what has happened in our community and make space for students to have a conversation about how they are feeling.
- For secondary schools, work as a team and determine one powerful place recognition and discussion can happen (like an advisory, or a specific class), so all students get an opportunity at an enriching discussion. The reason being, if every teacher hour after hour has discussion about the Chauvin Trial, it could be traumatizing for some students.
- If you have a student who needs more support, you can contact **<insert guidance for your school>**. We will be resources and will also create time and space for students who need to process more.

### **Here is some language you could use with your students:**

- I. Start by acknowledging what took place. Focus on facts and rely on our district [equity vision](#). Make a short statement to inform students. Here are a couple examples of language you could use:
  - a. *"Last May there was a tragedy in our community. A man named George Floyd was killed by the police. A police officer pressed his knee against his neck while he was handcuffed, laying face down on the street. The death of George Floyd was followed by a community, national and world wide response and protests about racism, it's effects and police violence. The job of police officers is to protect us but this police officer did not protect George Floyd. Mr. Floyd should not have died. The trial for that police officer, Derek Chauvin, will begin on March 8. We have lots of people in our community and our country who are sad and upset. Today we are going to make some time in our classroom to talk about it together."*
  - b. *"Last May there was a tragedy in our community. A man named George Floyd was killed by the police. A police officer pressed his knee against his neck while he was handcuffed, laying face down on the street. Three other officers were present and did not intervene. Mr. Floyd should not have died. The job of police officers is to protect others, but this police officer did not protect George Floyd. The death of George Floyd was followed by a community, national and world wide response and protests about racism, it's effects on individuals and communities, and police violence. We acknowledge that many, many police officers act with courage and care for their communities. We also acknowledge that racially we respond differently to*



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*the police based upon years of experiences with them. The trial for that police officer, Derek Chauvin, will begin on March 8. We have lots of people in our community and our country who are sad and upset. Today we are going to make some time in our classroom to talk about it together."*

## II. Questions you can ask students

- a. What questions do you have about this?
- b. How does this make you feel? *It's also ok for students not to share.*
- c. How should we respond in our own lives, in our school, in our world?

Thank students for sharing and encourage them to continue to process with their family or a trusted person.

## III. Below are more questions to lead discussions in classrooms or to facilitate Story Circle Discussions

- a. Depending on the grade you teach, you may want to share the book [Something Happened in Our Town](#) by Marianne Celano or [Black Lives Matter](#) by Duchess Harris.
- b. When you see pictures in this book or listen to the story, how does that make you feel?
- c. Who in the story experiences an advantage or disadvantage?
- d. How can we reject violence and solve problems peacefully in our daily lives?

## IV. As a staff, we will use the following guidelines for discussion and support:

- a. While we can share how we feel, refrain from offering personal beliefs.
- b. Offer the space and place for students to share feelings, concerns, and questions.
- c. Listen to the students and ask open-ended questions to be able to hear their perspectives.
- d. Consider the developmental age of students.
- e. Acknowledge students may have different perspectives and do not ask students to speak on behalf of any of their identity markers (race, gender, etc.)

## Additional Resources:

- Roseville Area Schools [Responding to Crisis in the News Landing Page](#)
- [Talking to Kids About George Floyd](#) - Child Mind Institute
- Teaching on Days After: Pedagogy for Equity & Justice
  - Engaging in a Pedagogy of Political Trauma: If you are teaching Black students or other students of color, it will be especially important to find multiple ways to support them in this moment. [Check out slides 18-23 in this presentation](#) for descriptions of what teachers have done in moments of political trauma.
  - Establish Dialogue Norms: Check out [slides 26-28](#)
  - [Check out slide 31 here for some interruptor phrases](#)
- Student Videos:
  - [George Floyd's impact on justice](#) - an interview with his 2nd grade teacher
  - [BrainPop Video](#)
- [Social Story for George Floyd](#)
- Story Circle Resources
  - Etiquette for Online Story Circles designed by Rose McGee [LINK](#)
  - About Story Circles: Guidelines, Ground Rules, and Facilitation [LINK](#)
  - Safe and Supportive Schools - [Circle Slides](#)
- [Resources to Help Teachers Heal, Learn, and Listen](#)
- Resources for Families to support their children:
  - [How to Talk with Young Children About the George Floyd Protests](#)



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- [Books and resources for Families](#)

- [Racism and Police Violence](#)
- [Teaching Strategies to Foster Community and Perspective Taking](#)
- [Teaching in the Wake of Police Violence](#)
- [Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education](#)
- [Police Violence Learning Plan](#)
- [How to Talk About Traumatic Events and Tragedies \(MDE\)](#)
- [Helping Youth after Community Trauma: Tips for Educators \(NCTSN\)](#)
- [Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Disasters and Other Traumatic Events \(NIMH\)](#)
- [School Climate, Safety, and Crisis \(NASP\)](#)
- [What To Say To Kids When The News Is Scary \(NPR\)](#)
- [Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma \(Child Welfare Information Gateway\)](#)
- Language to Respond to parent or family concerns:
  - We are having these conversations to prepare our students to be global citizens and to be critical consumers of information. I think it's important to acknowledge that we live in a diverse society where there is a wide range of beliefs. Our purpose is not to get consensus around beliefs but rather to teach that regardless of our beliefs, the way we treat people matters. There is a difference between beliefs and behavior. Our focus is behavior. In this school, we treat each other respectfully and with kindness. In this school everyone has a right to feel safe and proud of who they are and who their family is. We are creating an environment that prepares our children to live peacefully and respectfully in a politically and racially diverse society.