

The following statement was made by School Board Commissioner Marquell Johnson at the Board of Education Meeting on Monday, June 1, 2020.

Thank you Dr. Nordin for that well written and timely statement surrounding the murder of Mr. George Floyd. I would like to share a personal account of the impact the most recent injustices and murders of Ahmed Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have had on me and my family. I have lived in Eau Claire for 13 years and have experienced my share of racial incidents with both law enforcement and in the community. I am also reminded of the enormous work and efforts that are continuously needed in our community when examining community members social media comments (Nextdoor, Facebook, Local Media Outlets) surrounding the most recent injustices. Education and the commitment from all those involved in its delivery should be emboldened to shape the next generation's attitudes and behaviors regarding issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Discussions of issues related to EDI are a great start (but not enough), professional development and curricula implementation of EDI are signs of progress (but not enough), and accountability for those who disregard established policies surrounding EDI are warranted (but still not enough). Tangible and positive long-term impact on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will require personal daily effort on all community members to be aware of their own biases, prejudices, and cultural incompetence. These daily reminders would allow for all of us to remain engaged in the positive change that most of us seek. I am no longer naïve to think that this problem facing our country and community will be solved during my lifetime. I am reminded of stories that my grandmother shared with me as a child of seeing her family and other community members being lynched/murdered (but reassuring me that I wouldn't have to worry about racism when I become an adult); I am also reminded of the stories that both of my parents shared with me as a child about their experiences being part of the first African American children to desegregate their respective schools (but they too reassured me that I wouldn't have to worry about racism and injustices when I became an adult to the same degree). To my deceased grandparents and parents' disappointment, I have chosen to not provide my children with this same reassurance. However, it is my hope that genuine efforts by our school district and community addressing issues as it pertains to EDI, will be able to provide all of our children and the next generation those assurances and hope. Thank you.