



Leland Public Schools  
200 N. Grand Ave  
Leland, MI 49654  
231-256-9857

Dear Leland Students and Parents,

We haven't actually met yet, and normally we would know each other and have an established relationship before I would try to have this kind of conversation. However, as a result of recent events and the ensuing turmoil in our country, I wanted to reach out and share my position regarding the protests and demonstrations that have been occurring these last several weeks.

As a school committed to the International Baccalaureate program and its foundational principles, we are all troubled, upset, confused, and heartbroken by the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, and many others at the hands of police. The people who took an oath to protect violated their oath and undermined our trust. Mr. Floyd's killing, [the most recent in our troubled history of injustice toward African Americans](#) in our country, has forced us to question and examine our beliefs, implicit biases, and intentional or unintentional roles in perpetuating white privilege.

As uncomfortable and sometimes scary as it is, we need to question and reflect on our own privileges that have allowed us to stay immune to the struggles of our Black neighbors. Why is it that white people in our community move through the world so differently from our fellow citizens who are Black? We need to examine the disparity in our experiences and the underlying reasons that have created the privilege we who are white enjoy.

This will be hard. Will we take a defensive position and deflect responsibility to preserve our own comfort and avoid the discomfort of personal reflection? Or, will we live the IB principles of inquirers, thinkers, open minded, caring, reflective risktakers and act in anti-racist ways? Let's embrace these IB dispositions collectively and individually. We will question, examine, and communicate our care, unity with, and support for everyone in the Black community who is hurting and angry at the underlying societal problem of racism in America.

To our Black students, teachers, and families, you matter. We see you, we hear you, we mourn with you, and we will stand with you to confront the racism and injustices you live with as part of your American experience.

All people of color need us to stand with them to clearly state that we condemn acts of systematic and systemic racism and intolerance. And the Black community needs us now. We adults need to and will stop talking and defending our beliefs and listen, and will encourage each other to unify around the basic premise that any belief, act, or system that perpetuates the

problem needs to be reformed. We adults need to and will do better, and we will be better. We can do that together with you in our community, in our classrooms, in our homes.

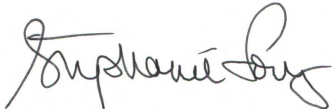
Every great social reform movement started with young people. We need you to speak, to question, to push, to challenge, and to lead us in creating the world in which you dream of living. I encourage us all to work to create that just world.

I'll be reaching out again when school starts to talk about ways in which we can watch, listen and learn together, but if you'd like to jump in now, I'd recommend starting here.

1. Diversify your social media feeds to include minority voices
2. Learn about the [Northern Michigan Anti-Racism Task Force](#)
3. Attend a local demonstration
4. [Join a Black Lives Matter Chapter](#)
5. [Donate to and/or get involved with the NAACP](#) or the [ACLU](#)
6. Get involved with the [Innocence Project](#)
7. [Read about racism and racial injustice](#)
8. [Engage in anti-racism work](#)
9. [Start or sign a petition](#)
10. [Register to Vote](#)

Thank you so much for reading and considering. We are here for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Stephanie Long, Superintendent

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

**— Desmond Tutu**