



June 5, 2020

To Our MVLA Students, Teachers, Staff, and Community,

Our district joins people everywhere in mourning and denouncing the killing of George Floyd. Adding his name to the roster of countless other victims of racially motivated, officially conducted violence against black men and women enlarges and deepens racism’s terrible stain on our nation’s democratic institutions that has been there since its birth.

That ugly birthmark is more than skin deep. It is rooted in the minds, unconscious as well as conscious, of too many among us. From that place, only education can remove it and replace it with something of beauty, the unwavering commitment to liberty and justice for all.

To that noble end, our district will continue to improve and promote an educational environment that welcomes diversity by habitually practicing the virtues of empathetic inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, mutual respect, and unwavering kindness -- an educational environment that realizes Martin Luther King’s dream in which people are measured not “by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

As an academic institution working to build that environment while striving to be true to the ideals of academic freedom, MVLA encourages and supports our students’ exercise of their rights to protest and to express their views, while still practicing the principles by which we embrace and celebrate our diversity.

Unfortunately, there were some recently posted hurtful messages on social media that undermine those principles. These had some harmful effects on our teachers and staff, who deserve better. We deeply regret such counter-productive, self-destructive behavior, and cannot tolerate it. Rather, we encourage our students to use their creative energies beneficially and more effectively, without causing harm to others, and inevitably to themselves. We saw examples of this yesterday when students at MVHS led a peaceful protest around the high school neighborhood, and, today, LAHS students are leading a peaceful march in Los Altos.

We live in trying times, beleaguered simultaneously by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, and now, the recent racially motivated killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others. All of these have tragic consequences in their own right, but they also afford us an opportunity to create a stronger and more just community. To our students, we urge you to channel your righteous indignation at recent events into dialogues with your teachers, parents, government officials and community members to deepen all of our understanding of racism’s awful legacy, so that we may use that understanding to work together in securing a better future for us all.

Sincerely,

Sanjay Dave, Board President, MVLA  
Fiona Walter, Board Vice President, MVLA  
Catherine Vonnegut, Board Clerk, MVLA  
Debbie Torok, MVLA Trustee  
Dr. Phil Faillace, MVLA Trustee  
Dr. Nellie Meyer, MVLA Superintendent

