

# BERGEN COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

**2019-2020**

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The Bergen County Association of School Administrators (BCASA), comprised of the school superintendents and central office personnel from Bergen County's school districts has, along with our students, their families, and our staff members, been witness to the repeated waves of civil unrest, turmoil and multiple evenings of reports from around the country following the death of George Floyd. These events, made all the more disturbing and disorienting as they are occurring during the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, shock the conscience, and require us to again confront a situation that exposes the racial, economic, and equity fault lines in American society.

We are firm in our belief that regardless of one's political affiliation or personal opinions, America, and therefore all Americans, needs to work harder to confront the grim reality of how we treat, view, and care for each other. In order for us to, at the very least, peacefully co-exist requires issues of race, power, and discrimination to be confronted head on, for difficult conversations to be held, and for all citizens to seek to find common ground, respect, and a belief in each other's inherent worth.

This is not a time for simplistic thinking, the sharing of misinformation, or the latching onto information (often inaccurate and unreliable) for the sole purpose of supporting one's personal opinion. Further, we call upon our state and national leaders to unify, rather than divide, to acknowledge common ground, and most importantly, to recognize that this ugly cycle of violence, recrimination, and anger will continue until we the people work together to stop it.

As a countywide organization that serves over 130,000 students and their families, we have tremendous resources that can help our school districts and communities address the persistent and disturbing issues of violence, racism, and the misuse of power in American life. This statement is the next appropriate step, but it should not be our only step. We are committed to playing our role in helping to develop programming, public offerings and opportunities that positively impact policy and practice.

To bring this to fruition, we will begin by seeking out and partnering with professional organizations whose mission is to help legacy organizations, such as ours, offer long term and relevant plans to address issues of institutional bias, culture change, and justice for all. As an association dedicated to the ongoing education, growth and welfare of children, we are committed to playing our role in helping to bring this dark period of American history to an end. We harken back to the words of famed educational writer Ted Sizer when asked why we need to do so. Simply put, "The children are watching."

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