

June 2020

Dear Fulton County Students:

While I recognize that school is not in regular session at this time, I still feel compelled to reach out to you in an effort to acknowledge the pain, fear and anger that many, if not all of you, must be feeling.

The death of Mr. George Floyd and others are a travesty and serve as a stark reminder that our nation still has important work to do in creating a culture where everyone is valued and treated with dignity and respect. To this end, I firmly believe positive change can take place when everyone commits to self-reflection and change. Your teachers, administrators and other school personnel are doing so now as we plan for the upcoming school year. We want you to know that you are cared for and that we are all committed to working hard at creating a great learning environment for all students.

Prior to our return to school, I respectfully request that you also engage in some self-reflection. We all must ask ourselves how we perceive and interact with others. I ask that you help us focus on improving by committing to treating your classmates, teachers, and neighbors in a kind, caring, and mutually respectful manner. Many years ago, when I was a young United States Marine, I learned that regardless of where my fellow Marines hailed from, the color of their skin, their dialect or any other superficial differences, I could count on them and they could count on me. At the end of the day, we were all United States Marines. We all had much more in common than differences, and that is true of us today as well.

I contend that all FCS students are filled with unique talents and gifts to be shared with the world. Every single one of you is special. You each deserve to feel welcome, wanted and worthwhile in our schools. Additionally, we each have a responsibility to create such an environment for one another. Please join me in this quest. Commit to treating your peers, teachers, and those in your sphere of influence with dignity and respect. I promise you it matters and will help us create the change we all desire and deserve.

Meanwhile, I have tasked members of the Fulton County School team to create a resource guide for students and parents. The guide will list resources to help you navigate the emotions you are feeling now. Research indicates that it is healthy to talk about your feelings. Please find someone to talk with, such as your parents or loved ones, about your emotions. You may also contact a trusted teacher, school counselor or other school official. We are here, we care, and we will listen.

In closing, I want to reinforce the significance and seriousness of the issue at hand. There is no room in Fulton County Schools for racism, intolerance or bigotry.

Relationships matter,



Dr. Mike Looney
Superintendent