



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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Sent on behalf of President Donald Harris and Executive Director Robert Rader

As leaders of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, we were horrified to see the act of police brutality in Minneapolis that killed George Floyd. There are no words to express our disgust at the callous application of pressure to the neck of Mr. Floyd for nearly nine minutes. No reasonable person could be anything but shocked by what happened.

Protesting this despicable act is not only appropriate, but a moral obligation to many Americans. The best of our nation is represented by those who nonviolently protest as would Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at a time like this.

We have witnessed violence many times before over such acts. While burning down businesses, pharmacies and even a police station are inappropriate and cannot in any way be condoned, the rage behind such acts is understandable. Until we as a nation and a culture accept others as equal, we will be subjected to more such acts.

CABE prides itself on its commitment to equity, not only internally, but, in the information and advice we provide to our members. We started a Diversity Committee several years ago and this year renamed it as the "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee". We have helped districts have the necessary conversations on what equity means. Just a few months ago we published an *Equity Toolkit*, which was sent to Board Chairs and Superintendents. It is available at <https://www.cabe.org/page.cfm?p=1504>. We have changed our policy to allow anyone to access it.

By providing opportunities to school board members and superintendents, we believe we can help our members to better understand issues such as implicit bias, white privilege and systemic racism. These are not easy concepts. But, without understanding them, it is very difficult to make progress on racism.

Through our equity work, we have learned three lessons on helping people understand equity:

- the work is never finished. We cannot expect closure;
- the work is very difficult and slow; and
- the work begins with every individual.

We look to a brighter day, when justice prevails. Until our society reaches that state we dedicate ourselves and the Association to continue our equity work and our commitment to ensuring that our students will enter a society where all are treated equally and equitably.