

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Those famous words, written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his 1963 “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” point to the idea that people everywhere have a moral responsibility to speak up whenever we witness injustice being imposed on anyone.

We are still witnessing injustice in our nation. As such, we all need to stand up and listen. After all, change starts with conversations, and we all must be willing to listen and learn. And as Shiawassee County’s educational leaders, we accept our individual and collective roles in helping with that change.

We commit to using our positions -- including the authority, access, and privilege that come with them -- to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the values of diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusion.

We condemn racism and discrimination in any form. We work tirelessly to interrupt and end harmful or inequitable practices and policies, eliminate implicit and explicit biases, and create truly inclusive, culturally responsive, antiracist school environments for adults and children. We quickly address instances of prejudice, injustice, and isolation in our schools. We strive to help all students and their family members experience an inclusive, safe learning environment. Even with all these efforts, we recognize more needs to be done.

Students, families, and staff are wrestling with how to begin the process. Topics related to race, protest, civil unrest, and inclusion are often uncomfortable. Again, despite the discomfort, all of us must be willing to engage in honest dialogue regarding the inequities that persist in our society. We stand together to build a stronger, more inclusive place to live, work, go to school, and play. This process will take time, be ongoing, and will need to reflect all of our stakeholders.

With respect,

Tricia Murphy-Alderman, Superintendent, Byron Area Schools
John Fattal, Superintendent, Corunna Public Schools
Craig McCrumb, Superintendent, Durand Area Schools
Matt Shastal, Superintendent, Laingsburg Community Schools
Mike Dewey, Superintendent, Morrice Area Schools
Anthony Berthiaume, Superintendent, New Lothrop Area Public Schools
Andrea Tuttle, Superintendent, Owosso Public Schools
Lori Haven, Superintendent, Perry Public Schools
David Schulte, Superintendent, Shiawassee RESD