

June 3, 2020

Dear Head Start Staff and Parents,

We know that this has been a painful and difficult time for all of you in the Head Start community as you continue to deal with drastic change and stress in your daily lives as a result of living through this global Pandemic. It also cannot be ignored that the harsh reality of Covid -19 unearthed some of the greatest and most glaring disparities in our state through health equity issues as it relates to race. This became apparent as we watched the daily headlines announce that 80% of the deaths in the state of Michigan due to Covid-19 are African Americans.

And now, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was stopped for a non-violent charge. As seen on video around the world, he was then killed by being pinned to the ground by his neck by a white police officer, while in the custody of the Minneapolis Police Department.

The Michigan Head Start Association (MHSA) and our Board of Directors believe the violence committed against George Floyd and other people of color is abhorrent. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of George Floyd. We want all of you in the Head Start community to know that you are not alone in your grief during this time. We also recognize that many of you are experiencing not just sadness but disbelief and anger as systemic violence and trauma continue through events like this one.

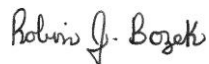
At the heart of our Association's Mission Statement is the goal to connect Head Start staff, parents and children by providing Advocacy, Education, Communication and Collaboration. But underlying these goals is the historic and deeply rooted values of Head Start to advance equity and justice. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As individuals and as an Association that exclusively serves the Head Start community, we stand with you in this quest for a better and more just society.

Like many of you, we also are searching for ways to effect actionable change. That search will take many forms: through advocacy, community involvement, voting, and many more. MHSA will offer a webinar around this subject in the next month for all staff and parents so that we might learn together. We will also add an extensive resource page to our Website to provide support to you and your families.

Wishing everyone to be safe and well,

Robin

Robin J. Bozek

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin J. Bozek".

Executive Director
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