



MAYNARD H. JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL

801 Glenwood Avenue, SE. • Atlanta, GA. 30316

MJJ Family,

As we continue to grapple with the recent tragic, heinous, criminal deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, along with countless other black men and women before them, I have been at a loss for words, but not of emotion. I am filled with anger, sadness, disgust, and frustration....emotions that are felt by so many. Yet, I know, that despite the depth of my emotions, it pales in comparison to that of the black community, who do not have the benefit of the privilege I have always held due to the color of my skin. On Monday evening, as I watched incredulously in real-time at the events playing out in our nation's capital where peaceful protesters were forcibly removed from a park to make way for a presidential photo op, my daughter expressed that she was confused and scared. While, as a father, I immediately wanted to comfort her and assure her that everything would be OK, I became fully cognizant that our white privilege has shielded her from such feelings for most of her first 12 years, a luxury that black people throughout this country, across the world, and in the very school and district I serve, do not have as they navigate a society where racism is alive and systemic. No person, and especially no child, should have to live with this burden and fear, yet they do, including the vast majority of our MJJ Family—students, teachers, staff, and families. While I will never live the experience of being a black person in America, I will not stop seeking to understand, to empathize, to advocate, and to fight for meaningful change.

Racism in any form has no place in our society, and in particular, anti-black racism must be eradicated. I stand with our entire school community in the fight against racism and in the fight for true reform within our law enforcement agencies, criminal justice system, and educational institutions. Black Lives Matter!

As educators, we are on the frontline of this fight, this mission, as we have a tremendous impact on the young women and young men who are the future of this country. It is incumbent on us to teach and model for our students how to enact change through activism in a positive way that will yield lasting and meaningful results, so that these future leaders can lead us to a better tomorrow. Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr., the namesake of our very school, recognized the need for strong leaders, especially in government, when he stated, "Politics is not perfect but it's the best available nonviolent means of changing how we live." As President Obama eloquently stated in his recent article *How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change*, "And if we can keep channeling our justifiable anger into peaceful, sustained, and effective action, this can be the moment when real change starts." I look forward to and welcome ongoing discussion and engagement with the entire Jaguar community on how to best work towards real, lasting change.

In prayer. In support. In solidarity. In action.

Adam

Dr. Adam J. Danser, Principal

