



Message to The Ingenuity Project Community

6/9/2020

I struggled to write this message as emails from other organizations pour into my inbox to address this significant moment of time. I feared adding to the collective pain of students and families in our program. It is impossible to turn on the news and not see the horrific events that have unfolded over the past few weeks involving the murder of Black people at the hands of police and the attack on protestors. Police violence is not new. For those of us in Baltimore, these images also reopen some of the same wounds and thoughts we had following the death of Freddie Gray and the uprising in our region. Silence has no place here from any organization.

The Ingenuity Project staff, teachers, and board stand firmly against racism and white supremacy. Over the past year, we have made dialogue on race, equity, diversity, and inclusion a strategic focus and high priority in order to prepare for the difficult work of questioning, dismantling, and rebuilding our own policies and practices.

The Ingenuity Project serves one of the most racially diverse populations across a racially segregated city. We are committed to open, honest, authentic, and action-oriented conversations about racism and how it is institutionalized. This includes our commitment to change Ingenuity's policies and practices that disproportionately impact students by race.

To become STEM leaders, students must be prepared to recognize and navigate barriers to their success and the success of those they lead. So, to prepare and launch the next *diverse* generation of nationally competitive STEM leaders in Baltimore City Public Schools, we deepen our commitment to:

- Developing emotionally intelligent leaders with respect for all humanity; educating students on the dynamics of privilege and power in the school environment and beyond.
- Empowering students and families to become allies with one another and with those who are marginalized, disrespected, or abused because of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, or religion.
- Implementing restorative practices for our students and alumni of color, while making Ingenuity a space where all students feel safe and supported and have access to the same opportunities.

Speaking on behalf of the Ingenuity family, we share a deep love for our students and want them to have a life filled with peace, joy, freedom, and opportunity. We stand in solidarity with our Black students and families and are committed to working with our school partners to learn how our organization can serve to disrupt and dismantle inequitable policies and practices together. This work is difficult, uncomfortable, and required.

This summer, we are beginning our strategic planning process with a focus on equity and inclusion. We have selected a method that creates opportunities for everyone in our community to share their dreams about themselves and for the organization, and provides space for moving towards the collective image of the future. For in the words of James Baldwin, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Stay well,

Lisette S. Morris
Executive Director
The Ingenuity Project