



June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

Dear GEC Community:

We are facing new challenges each day that are creating a sense of the unknown. With the impact of COVID-19 still very much a reality, we are navigating through the events taking place in our city after the senseless deaths and tragedies that have taken place, the latest being George Floyd. As you are aware, many of the protests and events over the weekend took place near our GEC building. Our school has not faced any damage, but neighbors in our building did have damage. Out of safety and to protect our school, we have put up boards on the front of the building while virtual classes and distance learning continue.

I acknowledge that I come to this reality with a different story and narrative. I cannot begin to say I understand how every member of our community currently feels. I can see, hear, and feel the heaviness that many members of our community are facing. Yesterday, I attended classes, and to no surprise found a culture of safety and support in our GEC spaces. I heard many of you share your thoughts and responses to the events over the weekend. I also heard tremendous insight around solutions and ways to bring the community together as well as questions about where we go from here.

GEC is a unique community united in the belief that education is critical and creating a community of inclusivity and support is what allows us to achieve our goals. We **stand** against racism, injustice, and hate. We **stand** as one unifying force knowing that each person's life in our community is valuable and so is each person's family member and friends. We know that black lives matter and no one should have to doubt his or her own safety. We are all at different stages in processing and in grieving what is happening around us. It is important to take the time you need. We are here to support each other.

Thank you for being part of this community and coming together to forge ahead. Thank you to our staff for creating safe spaces and to our students for staying committed to your goals while also balancing many other responsibilities. I encourage everyone to share ideas about how we, as a unified GEC, should move ahead. Throughout this week and in the following weeks you will see added student and staff support groups to provide a platform for us to talk through our processing. You are always welcome to contact me or any GEC team member with any extra support you need during this time.

As your School Director, I ***promise*** to lead with empathy and understanding as we walk alongside one another during these times. Please continue to stay healthy and safe. It is a privilege and an honor to be part of this community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chelsea Kirk  
School Director

Cc: Catherine Meloy  
Colleen Paletta  
GEC Leadership Team