



Kinder High School for the  
Performing and Visual Arts

R. Scott Allen, Ed.D  
Principal

Sean Tellez  
Assistant Principal

Alexandrea Williams  
Assistant Principal

Christina Farris  
Counselor

Rebecca Johnson  
Counselor

Jonathan Klein  
Magnet Coordinator

Kim Hines  
Registrar

June 4, 2020

Dear Kinder HSPVA Community,

I need to apologize. Communication from me has been lacking since the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. As I watched the events of the days that followed Mr. Floyd's death, I found myself horrified, angry, sad, and most importantly, lost. What do I say? How do I lead during time of uncertainty and unrest? Rather than writing from my heart, I issued a sterile and safe statement this week from Kinder HSPVA on our social media sites. Since then, I have listened to Black students, Black staff members, Black friends, and Black voices in the media. I have read and heard stories of racism from people I love and care deeply about. Stories which moved me to tears because of their experiences, and also because I DID NOT KNOW.

There is a small picture on my desk that states, "Remind yourself that it's okay not to be perfect." I come to you today knowing that my words are not perfect. As I type, it is my hope that you will allow me grace as I work to be better and to see and understand more clearly what our Black students and their families are feeling and experiencing.

I understand that people across the United States are protesting not only the death of George Floyd, but also police killings and brutality of many other unarmed Black people over time. Unarmed Black people being killed or brutalized by police officers and others is wrong and it makes me angry. It makes me very sad. Racism *must* stop. Listening is always important, but especially at this moment. This is not a time for making excuses. I would ask that *all* members of our HSPVA community take time to ask our Black students, teachers, staff members, and Black families how they are affected by the racism being protested across the country because of the senseless murders of innocent people. What support do they need? What changes in society, law enforcement and the judicial system do they think need to happen in this moment and beyond? Ask candid questions and then *listen*. By listening, we can better understand the realities Black people must face involving interactions with law-enforcement officers and others who act with prejudices, locally and nationwide.

I want to say that I do not believe a *school* can issue a statement. I believe that the people who make up a school issue statements in their actions daily. This message is not coming from Kinder HSPVA, but from me. As I move forward as the principal of Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, we *must* act. I pledge the following:

- In the beginning of the 20-21 school year, I will assemble a Black Student Advisory Panel to meet with me on a regular basis to discuss school concerns and talk about how we can better support our Black students.
- We will establish an Ally group. This group will comprise of people from various races and ethnicities that seek to pursue racial equity for Black Americans.
- I have asked Mr. Klein and Mrs. Williams to work with our current Black students to develop ideas on how to recruit more Black students to audition and attend Kinder HSPVA.
- Our Black students are underrepresented in our AP and Pre-AP classes. During the 20-21 school year, our counselors will meet individually with students to discuss what barriers and or challenges they may be facing and to encourage them to consider various rigorous courses.

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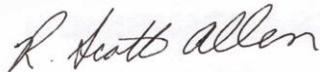
- I will do more to increase the diversity of our teachers on our campus through improved teacher recruitment and selection processes.
- Our fall professional development for faculty and staff will include a focus on diversity and inclusion to better serve our students.

Additionally, I always welcome ideas from our HSPVA community. If any current student or parent has ideas to better support our students and families, please contact me by email until we return to campus.

Again, I know that my words are not perfect and that some will find issue with them. After 12 years at HSPVA, I hope that our families, students, staff, and the community know that I care about *all* our students more than anything at the school. They are amazing and bring me such joy! To see our Black students and families struggling, hurting, and being discriminated against is not easy. I see you. I hear you. I will do better.

Black lives DO indeed matter. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Scott Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R. Scott Allen, Ed.D.  
Principal