

The killings in recent weeks of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd are brutal, tragic, and too familiar. On top of a public health crisis that has disproportionately affected communities of color, and the video from here in our city of Christian Cooper's encounter with casual and callous racism that thankfully did not end with another death, they are a crushing burden to bear. They reflect our national failure to confront systemic racism and systematic oppression that have always been facts of life in America.

Senseless tragedies like these still shock our conscience. They should, every time such horror happens, because they reveal how far we still have to come as America. The pain, anger, and fear that we all feel right now are the reactions to something deeply wrong and deeply unjust. We have seen this story played out before, with different details but the same central narrative.

New Visions for Public Schools is privileged to work with educators, students, and families who have bright hopes and deserve bright futures, but we know that when the lives of Black Americans are tragically, senselessly, and needlessly taken, hope dwindles. Our communities are exhausted and in pain.

As we mourn, we recommit ourselves to the work we've been doing for the last 30 years: developing resilient public schools and a more equitable public education system. Our work ensures that schools have clear plans for how to help every student succeed; that educators are well-trained and well-equipped so that ambitious plans are realistic and students achieve them reliably; that students and families in our partner schools have support to make it through dark days. It also means showing up for work every day, even and perhaps especially during the darkest days, because we know that the success of thousands of Black and Brown students depends, in part, on our commitment to the work.

We believe deeply that #BlackLivesMatter. We stand with those organizations who are working to ensure they do, with those individuals who are marching in the streets and peacefully demanding justice denied so many times before. We admire and applaud the myriad ways that these organizations and individuals are working towards the same righteous goal we are. Achieving the goal of a more just, more equitable society in which no person is deprived of opportunity, let alone basic rights or even life, because of the color of their skin, will require all our best efforts.

To New Visions students, families and educators, and to all Black and Brown students: your lives matter. Your dreams matter. You deserve the chance to achieve those dreams. We stand with you and we will keep working every day until we see a better tomorrow.



Mark Dunetz, President