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June 8, 2020

RE: Letter of Commitment to Equity for All Students at Brainerd Public Schools - ISD 181

Dear Brainerd Public School Community:

The recent tragic death of George Floyd set in motion a series of events in the Twin Cities and throughout the world that have called attention to the ongoing struggle for “liberty and justice for all.” This past week has also brought to the forefront the struggle of how to address continued inequality within our own educational system.

We cannot accurately say tonight that we at Brainerd Public Schools have all of the answers and are doing everything perfectly. Although we are proud of the intentional commitment the school district has made during the past years to address equity in our educational system there remains additional important work to do and will likely always be evolving. Though we have made progress we know we can do more - our students deserve it. Systemic change cannot occur through education alone; however, we embrace the challenge to become a part of the greater solution that is needed in our community, region, state and nation. Brainerd Public Schools is committed to finding continued solutions to improve equity education, to develop ongoing cultural competency, and to meet the needs of historically underserved populations. Every student, staff and community member has an invaluable place in our education system.

As we move forward, Brainerd Public Schools will develop a comprehensive district plan that includes that systemic solutions necessary to combat discrimination and oppression. We will do this through the following initiatives. Brainerd Public Schools will:

- Complete a thorough review of district policies, procedures and handbook expectations to ensure equity for all;
- Convene a multi-disciplinary advisory task force, including representatives who are skilled in cultural competency and racial equality, to bring forth prioritized recommendations for board consideration;
- Ensure culturally relevant curriculum offerings align with MN standards and best practice instruction;
- Provide additional professional development for all district representatives to increase awareness and deeper understanding;
- Adhere to our professional responsibility to report misconduct, harassment, or bullying; and
- Cultivate a school culture in which brave work, tough conversations, and whole hearts are the expectation to ensure that each child feels safe, accepted, heard and included.

At Brainerd Public Schools, we are committed to creating an even brighter, safer and more just future for all. What has happened in the last few weeks underscores the important work our teachers and staff complete on behalf of our students and community every day. The District is committed to taking action, now and in the future and inspiring the change that is needed. We look forward to partnering with Central Lakes College, neighboring school districts, our community, regional partners, and state/federal professional associations to be the systemic change we need to see in our world. Together, we will pursue educational excellence while building a safe and equitable learning environment and an inclusive future for all. Our students, our future, are counting on us!

Sincerely,
Board of Education - Brainerd Public Schools
Thomas Haglin, Board Chair
Laine D. Larson, Superintendent
Heidi Hahn, Assistant Superintendent