

FORRESTVILLE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT #221



SUPERINTENDENT
Mrs. Sheri Smith

Dear Forrestville Valley Families,

The past three months have been unique, and at times, incredibly difficult for the students, families and staff of the Forrestville Valley School District. In addition to the long-standing health, economic, and social-emotional impacts of the COVID-19 virus, there has been a great deal of societal unrest surrounding the death of George Floyd in Minnesota. This event has had a direct impact on our communities in northwest Illinois.

While we are not in session to assist your student directly, we do want to provide our families with resources. Discussing the protests and rioting in relation to race and inequality can be difficult. And yet, it is an incredibly important conversation to have with children. Recognizing that parents and schools may need support in this endeavor, the Illinois State Board of Education has released resources. Here is one such resource that connects to the Smithsonian Institute: *Caregiver's Guide to Talk to Children about Race*:
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/audiences/parent-caregiver>

Families should also take time to discuss what their child is consuming in the media. Ask them about recent events they have seen about on TV, social media, or in print. If they ask a question that you do not have the answer to, it's okay to say "I don't know. Let's see if we can find the answer together." Then, brainstorm ways to find someone or a resource for their questions.

Children and families also should consider the weight of these times on emotional well-being. Images of boarded up shop windows, increased police presence, and the many changes caused by COVID-19 restrictions can be worrisome for both young and old alike. The National Association of School Psychologists has provided a document to help educators and families support children who may be experiencing strong emotions:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OrPOTkalidOLZDM1t8itylBjbXBZylyf/view?usp=sharing>

The Forrestville Valley School District Belief Statements outline the understanding that ALL students "*Should be provided a safe learning environment*". This means that all children who enter our doorways, regardless of race, gender, religion, or ability should be free to learn without fear. We also believe that all students are "*Accountable for positive civic responsibility*." Our staff is dedicated to teaching students about the rights and freedoms that are guaranteed to ALL Americans.

If we can be of further assistance to you during these times please contact your school office.

Sincerely,



Sheri Smith