





Department of  
Education

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

# #SI Stronger Together

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Dear Staten Island/District 31 Community,

As educators and community members, we always strive to create opportunities for our students to be empowered, grow, and set the conditions for a better and more just future. Now, in this time where we, along with our students, neighbors, and community are continually witnessing division, unequal treatment, and racism, it is a time to act.

The death of George Floyd on May 25 has again surfaced that racism remains a sad reality pervasive in our nation and society. It re-opened the unhealed wounds of the death of Eric Garner for us in the Staten Island community. Our work as a borough prioritizing diversity, courageous conversations, and equity must lead us to action and not further division, mistrust, or inaction. We can do better as a community, a city, and as a nation.

This morning, I had the opportunity to hear Curtis Hayes Jr. during a television interview. This 31-year-old Black young man was advising a 16-year-old co-protester. He said to the younger man, “we have to continue to fight, we have to come up with a better way to ensure our anger and rage sparks a fire and desire” to change our laws, our representatives in government and the narrative we collectively own. Mr. Hayes reminds all of us to be mentors, teachers, and most important allies for our black and brown and all students as they find ways to express their feelings, anger, hopes, and solutions.

The importance of conversations, listening, and truly “seeing” each other is more important than ever before. Some of the things we should remain focused and committed to as we still navigate remote learning, COVID19, and now social justice protests are:

- Allow for student, family, staff conversations
- Reach out to our community partners for support in facilitating discussions
- Allow students to continue to have voice and advocacy
- Ensure that support staff are continuing to check in with students, families, and other staff members
- Create opportunities for students to use music, art, writing, and research to express anger, hopes, and solutions
- Additionally, please refer to [Chancellor Carranza’s message and supports](#)  
(external link: <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/programs/striving-for-justice>)

I, along with Superintendent Vincenza Gallassio, Executive Director Christopher Anzalone, our school leaders, and the borough leadership team remain committed to our students, community, and to the mission of eradicating racism. Our teams are united to work in partnership towards this goal.

In partnership and unity,

Anthony. R. Lodico

Executive Superintendent-Staten Island