Statement from the Board of Central School District 13J, Superintendent Jennifer Kubista, the Central Education Association, and the Oregon School Employees Association Chapter 124 on the killing of George Floyd and need to address institutional racism in our public schools:

Dear families, staff, community of Central School District 13J,

In the past weeks, we have lifted our voices and hearts toward those who have been marginalized and mistreated because of their race, because they are Black or Brown. The systemic racism in our nation has been brought to the forefront of our community awareness by the recent death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and many others.

We believe education is a fundamental right. We have made a concerted effort to organize our district around values identified by our students, our staff, our families, and our community. Our stakeholders clearly want schools which are inclusive, diverse, equitable, safe, respectful, and focused on the whole child.

However, we recognize that as a predominantly white organization, it’s critical that we lean into uncomfortable conversations and truly challenge ourselves to listen and push ourselves to embody true and meaningful allyship. We must seek to take direct action aimed at uplifting our students who belong to communities that have been marginalized and attacked for too long.

In the context of our public schools, that means instituting equitable policies and regulations; providing professional learning focused on race equity and culturally responsive teaching practices; re-examining our discipline systems; creating pathways for educators of color to enter and remain in education so our schools better reflect the diversity of our communities; and training our educators to meaningfully incorporate race and racial equity into curriculum.

It is the fundamental duty of educators to uplift the oppressed, and for the Central School District, that includes addressing any form of discrimination or racism that exists in our schools, and building a public education system that is rooted in equity.

The students we care for and nurture deserve a school system where they feel safe and where their unique identities are respected and valued.

This won’t be a perfect process, but taking steps forward together is what matters. We will continue to learn and adjust as we go, knowing that the path may not always be clear. Let us extend grace to each other through our conversations, wherever we are, whomever we’re with. We welcome input from our community (info@central.k12.or.us), even when it is uncomfortable, so we can evaluate how our organization can use our power and our privilege to combat racism wherever and whenever it appears.

Steve Love,
Board Chair

Benjamin Gorman,
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OSEA Chapter President

Adrienne Gault,
CEA Past-President

Cynthia Mathis, OSEA Chapter President-elect

Dr. Jennifer Kubista,
Superintendent

Belen Amezcua,
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Peggy Clyne,
Board Vice Chair