BioEYES Statement of Solidarity

We, like many of our peer educational programs and institutions, are writing today because George Floyd’s murder has created yet another moment in history where silence is not an option. Why are millions protesting around the world? Why is this murder of this black man different than the others that have come before? What is good policing? What are the policies and procedures pervasive within our institutions that promote prejudice, and what will move us towards racial equity? How can we make our employers fairer and more inclusive? How does each of us knowingly or unknowingly contribute to the status quo in this country that treats people of color in ways that hinders their “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness?” If I am not already involved in social justice action, what can I do to support my black and brown neighbors? These are some of the questions that the BioEYES team have been asking, with the goal of deepening our commitment to racial and social justice and taking action to create positive change.

George Floyd’s murder is just the latest in the more than 4,000 known lynchings like this in America, that are beginning to be recounted and memorialized today by groups like the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, and the Equal Justice Initiative. For those of us in Baltimore, we remember Freddie Gray who went into a police transport vehicle alive only to come out mysteriously dead. We remember that moment, but we also remember the thousands and thousands of peaceful Baltimoreans out in the streets demanding that, “Enough is Enough.” Yet, police brutality didn’t end, such that now we have Breonna Taylor in Louisville, David Jones in Philadelphia, and Eric Garner in New York.... But this moment is not just about police brutality. Our fellow Americans have been the victims of a history of racial terror and violence for more than 400 years. Black and brown people are still judged by the color of their skin and not by the content of their character. Let George Floyd's senseless killing be the spark that finally allows us to end systemic racism and other forms of oppression.

For the last 18 years, BioEYES teams in the U.S. have been delivering high-quality, hands-on science education to K-12 teachers and students in our communities of color. Our program goals are to promote children's natural interest in science, and develop the talents of the next generation of STEM leaders. In the past, our program was sometimes the only science that kids received, making it challenging for our young people to proceed in the field. Luckily science is now more prevalent in the schools we visit. We are also working hard to grow our programs. However, we recognize that simply serving our communities is not enough.

BioEYES teams around the world are publicly committing to doing everything in our power to change ourselves, change the organizations where we work, and change the societal structures that keep white supremacy in place so that we never have to mourn the loss of another George Floyd again. We have begun meeting every week to discuss racial and social justice, and we will be developing a framework for change, guided by concrete goals and accountability measures. Because we believe that transparency is important, we will share our progress with you on all of our communication channels.

To our black and brown neighbors, we to stand in solidarity with you and give you our word that we will demand justice on your behalf, and will agitate for change within our institutions and society at large.
Finally, we see this as a moment to partner with our BioEYES supporters who play a big role in enabling us to reach the students in our respective cities who lack opportunities because of segregation and so many other ills, so they can become leaders in STEM fields. Our students are bright and talented and have so much more to offer our world than what society allows them to contribute. We hope you will continue to support our efforts to provide a rigorous science education for the children we serve, and especially among those who are held back due to a lack of resources and opportunities. Together, we can achieve justice for all.

Yours in empathy and support,

Steve, Jamie, Valerie, Rob, Terrone, Jackie, Tracy, Anthony, and Laura