

Bruce, Kristina

From: Karen Boss <karenboss@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Town Manager's Office; langj@chelmsford.k12.ma.us; murraysd@chelmsford.k12.ma.us; dicka@chelmsford.k12.ma.us; quinns@chelmsford.k12.ma.us; Bruce, Kristina; Spinney, Jim; Ahern, Dan
Subject: Four changes for Chelmsford

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To the folks in leadership positions in Chelmsford whose work is directly related to the four changes outlined at last night's vigil in memory of George Floyd (and I ask you to share this with others, such as every Selectperson and CHS deans, etc.):

Last night, I attended the vigil on Chelmsford Common organized by CHS junior Emma Walsh. I was impressed by the speakers both young and older, and I was uplifted by the number of people who attended in our mostly white town. The peacefulness of the event and the power in the eight minutes and forty-six seconds of complete silence while attendees knelt was both uplifting and sobering. More people are speaking out than ever before about the systemic racism in our country. But without real action, no real change will occur.

Some may think that places like Chelmsford aren't at the heart of the needed changes. Places that are more diverse must need the changes first, right? No. Every community in the United States needs change. And those that are mostly white need to provide education about white privilege, teach what it means to be anti-racist, and put trainings and fail-safes into place across sectors, especially those where people have worked for decades, like the police department and town hall. White people are the ones who can stop racism, because it is us who perpetuate it. White people are the ones who can change systems, because it is us who hold all the power.

Last night, CHS alumnus Arun Venugopal ('15) spoke passionately about this need for change. You can find the full text of his talk on his Facebook page. I am proud to share a hometown with this young man, who was a highlight of last night's presentations. He included in his talk four changes that youth have put together for Chelmsford to adopt. To quote him, "These are not outrageous demands – but they require action to become reality. They require your actions in order to become reality. I am willing, as I'm sure many here are, to hold a town hall with our leaders where we discuss possible methods of implementing these reforms."

These are the four change items, all of which seem utterly attainable to me:

1. First, change starts with the youth. Chelmsford Public Schools must require all classrooms to include texts written by Black authors, researchers, and writers by the start of the 2021-2022 school year. 50% of all English and History curricula must utilize texts from Black authors and historians. We cannot shut their voices out of the picture.
2. Next, the town must hire a diverse independent group to investigate all of CPS's current curricula, school assembly speakers, staff hiring practices, and school discipline records to determine more culturally-responsive approaches to all issues regarding race and politics.
3. Third, the town must hire a diverse, majority-Black independent group or organization of people to conduct mandatory yearly racial bias training with Chelmsford's Board of Selectmen, Town Manager's office, Police Department, and Chelmsford Public Schools administration, faculty, and staff – and we must hold our leaders accountable for failing to successfully complete training.
4. Finally, the town must, in conjunction with an advising committee comprised of people of color, create the position of an independent anti-racism auditor, the first of its kind in Middlesex County. The town must hire a Black individual to

monitor and report on any and all racially-biased statements or actions from police officers, CPS staff, Chelmsford students, and residents-at-large, and advise town and school leaders on appropriate responses and actions.

I ask you, as leaders, as educators, as elected officials, and as potential changemakers in the town and in the state, to take these seriously. Make them happen. There is no reason why you shouldn't.

Best,
Karen Boss (CHS '91)

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A book hatches, too. -Oliver Butterworth, author of *The Enormous Egg* (1956)