

At the Governor's School for the Arts, we strive to create a community of artists that is diverse, caring, brave, committed to growth, and empowered. We also believe it is important to listen to and learn from voices that have historically been oppressed, suppressed, and marginalized. Right now, it is especially important to listen to black voices.

These past weeks have laid bare the injustice and pain that black Americans have faced for centuries at the hands of systemic racism. Not all of us can comprehend the pain and oppression the black community has been subjected to, but all of us can stand and act in support of them. We acknowledge GSA has a role to play in dismantling racism. We have not done enough. We pledge that we will do better.

At the conclusion of each summer program, we tell our students that GSA is not a place, but a way of living – and therefore each student has the power to be a beacon of GSA's values in their home communities. As we look around the world today, we call on our GSA Family – especially those who are white – to lean in and listen deeply to black voices. Then, take action. GSA itself has much work to do, and that includes upholding these values at our upcoming 2020 summer program. With the amount of youth involvement in recent demonstrations, we know this summer's young artists represent not only the future of creative leadership, but the present as well.

To the GSA 2020 class: remember that artists find strength through vulnerability – be open to being challenged, remain courageous, embrace the fact that none of us have all of the answers, and lead with love. We have the opportunity to create a powerful community this summer, and it will take the heart, voice, and spirit of each of us to do so. This moment is a poignant reminder of the role artists play in activism, facilitating dialogue, creating change, and instigating healing – each of you play that role.

To our black neighbors, artists, and GSA Family members –we see you. We love you. We carry your hearts. And, we are listening to you. You matter. Black lives matter. Together, let's build a new and better world through the arts.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL
FOR THE ARTS

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