Good afternoon,

This has been a tumultuous week with the death of George Floyd. I am truly saddened by the events that have taken place and know that it is affecting our staff, students and families as well. We are all grieving his loss and are looking for ways to make things better. This has been made more difficult because we don’t have our usual forum of work to vent, grieve or even discuss our thoughts and feelings. Personally, I grieve for his family and friends who have lost someone important to them. I struggle with what I can do to make a difference.

I am glad the district is reaching out to staff and making commitments to create a better environment that is supportive and active in promoting racial justice. This will not be fixed overnight, but there has to be change. Hopefully, within our union,we too can promote racial justice for students and make sure our members are treated equitably and respectfully. As has been pointed out, hope isn’t a strategy. So I will make a commitment to our members that over the next 3 years in my service to you that I will work to coordinate with our Educators of Color committee and advocate for their work in our district.

One of the ways that you can be a voice is by being engaged with the focus groups that are being set up. These groups will review Distance Learning regarding what worked and what may have been a challenge. This process will help shape what all our students will need this fall to be successful.

In this troubled time, remember that we need each other more than ever. Without being at our sites, we must reach out to each other for support and comfort. If I can be of help or service, let me know. I may not have answers for you or even the right words,but I am more than willing to sit and listen because I care.

Sincerely,

Dan Kuhlman

President, Rochester Education Association

dan.kuhlman@edmn.org

507-319-7321