

Girls Talk Math Statement on #BlackLivesMatter

While the #BlackLivesMatter movement is rooted in a response to police brutality, we recognize that these issues stem from the racism that is embedded in our society. As educators, we feel it is important that we make a clear stance on the #BlackLivesMatter movement and commit to anti-racism work in schools and higher education.

To our Black campers (and their families):

#BlackLivesMatter: You are important to us. You are a fundamental reason why our camps exist. We recognize that our society, educational institutions, and the mathematics community are failing you. We believe in your abilities - as mathematicians, as intellectuals, as whatever you want to become. You deserve more than the educational institutions are giving you, and we are committed to working to build a system that works for you.

To all mathematics educators:

The education system in place is failing to work for our Black students. Unequal school funding, gatekeeping at predominantly white institutions, and lack of Black educators all contribute to racialized education inequality in this country. These larger structures can feel impossible to fight, but as members of these institutions we are precisely the ones responsible for doing better.

This is an issue affecting the entire mathematics community. Mathematics is late to this conversation. We are late to this conversation. Efforts to recruit students from underrepresented and marginalized groups must be implemented alongside concerted resolutions to change the status quo: We are effectively recruiting students to enter spaces where they are not welcome and patting ourselves on the back for this work. We need to stop, reflect on our actions and priorities, and hold ourselves and our institutions accountable.

Take Action

We invite our campers, all the young people interested in mathematics, and all parents and educators to take personal, deliberate, anti-racist actions today. We ask everyone to join us in analyzing our own behavior and taking steps to change it. We provide a non-exhaustive list of resources as a possible starting place:

- **Students**

1. Educate yourself. The independent feminist bookstore [Charis Books & More](#) and the nonprofit [Teaching for Change](#) have put together teen-appropriate social justice focused reading lists.
2. [Understand how your rights](#) to free speech, protest, and join organized action apply when you are in school.

3. Write a letter to your school or community newspaper about your thoughts and feelings about the racial disparities in education, the criminal justice system, and society at large. Explain what you think should be done about it.
- **Educators and Parents**
 1. Educate yourself. See, for example, [this list of books](#) for parents and educators who want to engage in anti-racist work.
 2. [Black Lives Matter at School](#) created an [anti-racist curriculum guide](#) with math, social studies, language, and arts materials.
 3. Join the [Teaching Tolerance](#) project from the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), starting with the [Race & Ethnicity](#) module.
 4. The [Anti-Defamation League](#) created a [short lesson](#) specifically about George Floyd's death and police killings of Black people, including suggested readings, discussion questions, and action steps for teens.
 - **Everyone**

Join the conversation in your community, online, and on social media. For example:

 1. Follow [@BlackLivesMatter](#) and the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) hashtag.
 2. The *Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture* launched an online portal called [Talking About Race](#) designed to help individuals, families, and communities navigate conversations about racism, racial identity, and the way these forces shape every aspect of society.
 3. A [collection of anti-racist resources](#) organized into a scaffolded list presented in stages of 'identity development' is being curated by former and current students of the Princeton Theological Seminary. The organization of this collection makes it particularly useful for navigating conversations with people at different stages of this work. The list also includes questionnaires for students and educators to examine their roles in these conversations.

We commit to educate ourselves and our students about the way things are and give them tools to push the conversation forward. *Girls Talk Math* exists to show traditionally excluded students they DO belong in STEM higher education. We commit to making STEM and its institutions into more welcoming places for them.

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