Again, we find ourselves outraged by the senseless deaths of Black Americans. Like countless others before them, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor died simply because of the color of their skin without any consequences to those who commit such a heinous crime against humanity. The treatment of Black Americans, particularly males, that historically was shared through personal testimonials subject to contradiction, is now revealed to the public through raw unedited video footage.

Systemic racism through lack of equity, opportunity, and access to resources and liberty does not easily manifest in the video footage we witnessed in Minneapolis, but it is visible through the disparities in health, wealth, and education for Black Americans.

We know that racism and biases towards Black Americans is deeply rooted in the history of the United States and is a part of our daily lives. The time has come to demand systemic actions that cast out racial inequity and build foundations that will support social justice.

All of us need to do our part to root out systemic racism in our country. Corporate and private philanthropies wield considerable social and economic power in the U.S. However, we need to do better in leveraging our resources to help achieve racial equality in our country. We need to lean in and be part of the solution.

What we as funders can do to remove racial inequities for Black Americans:

• **ACKNOWLEDGE** inherent racial bias exists that influences how funders have traditionally executed philanthropy.

• **SPEAK** with black communities about the challenges that need to be addressed.

• **HIRE** more Black Americans and people of color in our organizations.

• **PARTNER** with communities of color to advocate systemic change that achieves racial equity for all.

• **COMMIT** financially to causes and organizations dedicated to change to racial inequality.

• **FUND AND SUPPORT** capacity building for more minority led organizations who are practitioners and know their communities' needs best.

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While we may have the best of intentions, it is inaction and silence by people and organizations that perpetuates racism and social inequality for Black Americans and people of color. If we do not actively help solve the problem, we inadvertently contribute to it. Only by acting as ONE people will we achieve racial equity.

As Michelle Obama so eloquently said,

“Race and racism is a reality that so many of us grow up learning to just deal with. But if we ever hope to move past it, it can’t just be on people of color to deal with it. It’s up to all of us—Black, white, everyone—no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out.”

As a community of funders in education, the STEM Funders Network sees education as the Great Equalizer. We are committed to ensuring that all young people have equitable access and opportunities in education. By so doing, we can build a next generation of young people who can celebrate and respect diversity. At the same time, we must face the reality that uneven starts towards prosperity have contributed to where our nation is today, and we must strive to make it a fair and equitable race to the finish.

Together, we are leaning in. We encourage you to lean in too and work to eradicate racial inequality. Without collective action, we continue to perpetuate racial injustice. Let’s work together to address racial equity and social justice.

David Coronado  
Chair, SFN

Alfred Mays  
Vice-Chair, SFN