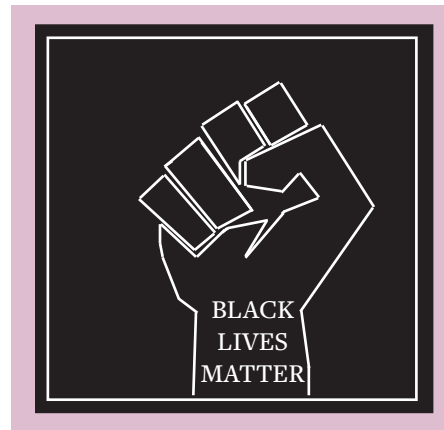


march for beliefs

Students discuss equity with school officials



Seven members of the school administration sat on one side of the entrance to the middle school. Twenty-five students, former and current, were on the other side with signs in hand. Three Johnston policemen were positioned among the group.

June was a turning point for American history. Americans took to the streets to protest the death of George Floyd from Minneapolis Police. Though some of the protests turned violent, the protest that happened at the middle school stayed calm.

The group's goals were discussing about hiring more minority teachers, how the staff addresses racism, diversity within the district, and the use of offensive symbols in the schools.

Senior Sophie Flemming was unsure how the march went. "We talked to the administration," she said. "They definitely heard. I'm not sure on how much of an impact we made."

Superintendent Laura Kacer said the cause of the protest did not start through a Johnston student or resident, it was pushed by an outside force. "I was actually alerted by the Johnston PD that they were aware. We said that actually we were not," she said. "It

all started out as we're not sure because someone put this out on social media."

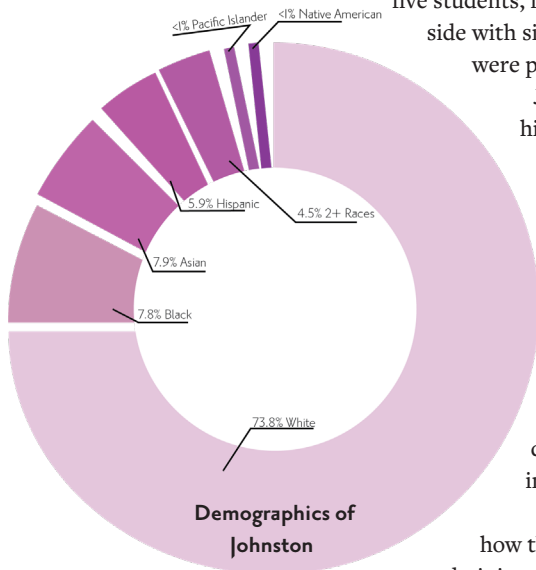
Students did not understand the need for the police as the march was peaceful. "(It was) low key," Flemming said. "Them being there at all, why were they there?"

Senior Aidan Weyer agreed. "The officers being there at the protest really didn't help anything, and with the administration not knowing how the demonstration would play out, having the officers there was for safety precautions for both sides at the event," he said.

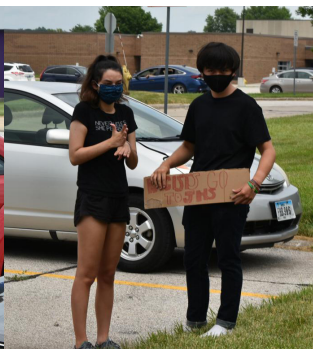
Administration had heard the problems before, but the steps to solve the issues proved difficult. Kacer said the social diversity of Johnston and the social economical aspect play a role in it. "If your comparing Johnston to a Des Moines school our demographics and social economic makeup look very different." She said hiring minority staff was difficult. "It truly is hard to find minority members that want to go into the teaching field."

Kacer said equity was a focus for the district and had to be balanced with other needs like student growth and achievement, community engagement, employee excellence and fiscal responsibility and stability.

This made students discouraged. "I really don't think the protest had that much of an impact on the administration, however because nothing has really changed since," Weyer said.



Officers Zach Grandon and James Slack talk with students and community members about their purpose for gathering at the middle school. Community members staged a march at the middle school June 26 to address inequality and racism in the district. Caption and photo by Noah Gilbert



Aidan Weyer '21 holds a sign next to Sophia Flemming '21 as they wait for instruction from the police officers. Then, superintendent Laura Kacer and other administrators came out of the middle school and asked the group to join them in conversation. Caption and photo by Noah Gilbert



Community members and students talk with superintendent Laura Kacer about how the district plans to handle things like the Confederate flag being displayed on campus. Students said they had seen the Confederate flag worn on clothing and flown from vehicles while school was in session. Photo and caption by Noah Gilbert

List of Unarmed POC Killed by Police From 2019-2021

Vincent "Vinny" M. Belmonte,
 Patrick Lynn Warren Sr.,
 Andre Maurice Hill
 Casey Christopher Goodson Jr
 Angelo "AJ" Crooms
 Sincere Pierce
 Marcellis Stinnette
 Jonathan Dwayne Price
 Dijon Durand Kizzee

Rayshard Brooks
 Carlos Carson
 David McAtee,
 Tony "Tony the Tiger" McDade,
 George Perry Floyd, Powderhorn
 Dreasion "Sean" Reed
 Michael Brent Charles Ramos,
 Daniel T. PrudeBreonna Taylor,
 Manuel "Mannie" Elijah Ellis

From RENÉE AFTER In Memoriam: I Can't Breathe

A community member holds a sign as they walk to the gathering spot by the middle school's front entrance. Around 50 former and current students and seven administrators talked for about two hours. Photo and caption by Marandah



Yeisi Hernandez '20 and Marquita Norwood '20 take cover under their sign from ongoing rain during the conversation that took place between community members and administration. At one point, three trucks Photo and caption by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

photos by: Noah Gilber
 story and captions by: Jake Jordan
 mod by: Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

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 belief march

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 Template

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Process 4-Color (CMYK)

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