



## Reflections on Standing up for Social Justice

### Category: Social Media

**Submission Summary:** As the communications staff at the Alameda County Office of Education was gearing up for our first virtual graduation ceremony, a shift necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we asked our superintendent to open the ceremony by leading the pledge of allegiance. The ask gave her pause.

In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, racial tensions were high and protests were emerging across the country. Superintendent L. K. Monroe wanted to present something different than the pledge - something that conveyed the intent of the pledge, but that also recognized the pain that the nation was enduring.

We were tasked with facilitating a social media focused digital campaign that featured a retelling of the pledge along with four pieces of personally written reflections by Superintendent Monroe on the events that were unfolding across the country and of her life and service as an educator. Those reflections were distributed over the course of several days in a social media campaign series and collected on our website.

Each day for four days, a social media "Reflection" was released with a themed, personal essay from Superintendent Monroe on all social media channels, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

In addition, we produced a social-media friendly video titled *Lifting Every Voice: Realizing the Promise of the Pledge* which intercut the Pledge of Allegiance being recited by young students with Superintendent Monroe's reading of the 1905 song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" originally known as the Negro National Anthem. It was this video we presented at our virtual graduation in place of the Pledge of Allegiance.

We also prepared an email at week's end to our community from Superintendent Monroe which featured the video along with all four of her social media essays. This content was repurposed and reformatted from the social media campaign via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to a webpage on our site and supplemented with additional anti-racism resources, which were also distributed via social media.

Planning is a luxury during the time of COVID. As the "Black Lives Matter" demonstration were ramping, we immediately began discussion our response as an agency, located in one of the most diverse counties in California. Planning involved working with Superintendent Monroe on her messaging, mining photos and preparing social tiles that would reflect the tone of the message.

**Our research** involved looking back at the historical context of "Lift Every Voice" as well as our County Superintendent's family and educational service history. We planned to release all of our materials as a series on social media over a sustained period of days, followed by an email blast that included all of the materials as well as links to anti-racism resources.

**Our target audience** was the Alameda County community as well as attendees at our virtual graduation ceremony for the school program run by the Alameda County Office of Education.

**Our goals** for the campaign was to share Superintendent Monroe's sentiments as a high-profile African American leader in our community. Creating opportunities to amplify her message around engagement on social media - reposts, shares and likes/comments was strategy.

The project had a wide reach and we were contacted by several school districts which wanted permission to post the content on their own websites.

We reached approximately 15,000 people combined through our social media channels and mailing list and received approximately 1,000 interactions/media plays.