



**July 1, 2020**

Our separate and unequal K-12 education system is one of the foundational pillars of structural racism in the United States – school segregation directly reinforces racial and class hierarchy. The COVID crisis has sharply exposed these inequities in our education system, and the ongoing protests against systemic racism in policing have also brought demands to remove police stationed in public schools attended by African American and Latinx children.

The ongoing demands for racial justice force all of us to reflect and reshape our ways of thinking, speaking, and acting so as to stop perpetuating racial injustice. This must include a thorough audit of our educational system – what is taught, who is teaching it, how much money we are spending on which children, and where our children are assigned to school.

The educational reform agenda is long, and our intention here is to provide a few thoughts based on our experience in advocating for educational equity and school integration.

***Anti-racist policies for state education departments and legislators<sup>1</sup>***

- 1) Ensure equity in per pupil school funding for all students, so that students who need the most receive the most.
- 2) Ensure equity in capital funding for new schools or school improvements, and prioritize state capital funding to incentivize school integration.
- 3) Reduce or eliminate the role of local property taxes in funding education and school construction.
- 4) Affirmatively fund cultural competency and anti-racist training for teachers and school district staff, and require curriculum reform to support the history and lived experience of students of color.

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<sup>1</sup> See also National Coalition on School Diversity, *Model State School Integration Policies*, May 2020 ([https://school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/NCSDPB11\\_Final.pdf](https://school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/NCSDPB11_Final.pdf))

- 5) Fund and expand teacher training and recruitment efforts, with specific goals and timetables, to increase racial diversity in the teaching profession.
- 6) Fund and support intra- and inter-district transfer programs and magnet schools to support racial and economic integration; support local school integration planning efforts.
- 7) Incorporate measures of school segregation and progress on school integration into state accountability standards (and the state ESSA plan).
- 8) Fund racially and economically integrated summer programs for elementary and middle school age children, and integrated magnet enrichment programs for high schoolers.
- 9) Pass strict rules against school district secession.

***Specific policies for local school districts<sup>2</sup>***

- 10) Require all teachers and administrators to participate in anti-racist training.
- 11) Affirmatively recruit teachers and administrators of color.
- 12) Remove police from the public schools.
- 13.) Actively monitor and work to eliminate racial disparities in suspension and expulsion.
- 14) Affirmatively promote racial and ethnic integration of students, faculty and staff in all schools,<sup>3</sup> and address segregation within schools.
- 15) Collaborate with nearby school districts to explore opportunities to promote cross-district school integration.
- 16) Positively enable student engagement and activism in support of educational equity, anti-racism, and integration.

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<sup>2</sup> See also the “5Rs of Real Integration” framework for integrated, equitable education developed by students with IntegrateNYC, <https://www.integratenyc.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> School integration efforts can include drawing or redrawing K-12 school district lines, changing school attendance zones and student assignment policies, consistent with the U.S. Constitution. See, in general, *Still Looking To The Future Voluntary K-12 School Integration A Manual For Parents Educators And Advocates* (NACP LDF and the Civil Rights Project, 2018), <https://www.naacpldf.org/our-thinking/issue-report/education/still-looking-to-the-future-voluntary-k-12-school-integration-a-manual-for-parents-educators-and-advocates>.