

January 14, 2022

To: Marie-Joseph Ayissi, Secretary, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

From: Poverty & Race Research Action Council (U.S.)

Re: List of suggested themes relating to school segregation for upcoming U.S. review

Set out below are suggested themes for the upcoming U.S. CERD review, reflecting important current challenges facing the United States in the area of education, specifically in addressing the continuing policies that segregate low income children of color in the U.S. in racially isolated schools with inadequate resources. We appreciated the Committee's attention to these issues in its 2014 Concluding Observations,* and we hope that the CERD Committee will hold the U.S. accountable for making progress on these issues:

1. In 2018 the U.S. withdrew its guidance advising local school districts on methods that could be used to increase racial integration in U.S. schools. Why has this guidance not been reinstated?
2. Has the U.S. provided funding for states and local districts to plan for increased school integration? (2014 Concluding Observations recommendation 14b)
3. What steps has the U.S. taken to “adopt a comprehensive plan to address racial segregation in schools and neighbourhoods”? (2014 Concluding Observations recommendation 14a)
4. What steps is the U.S. taking to address the racial segregation impacts of predominantly White communities “seceding” from racially integrated school districts?

* From the CERD Committee's 2014 Concluding Observations for the United States:

14. While welcoming measures taken by the State party to address de facto racial segregation in education, such as the formation of the Equity and Excellence Commission in 2011, the Committee remains concerned that students from racial and ethnic minorities disproportionately continue to attend segregated schools with segregated or unequal facilities and that even those who are enrolled in racially diverse schools are frequently assigned to “single-race” classes, denied equal access to advanced courses and disciplined unfairly and disproportionately due to their race, including referral to the criminal justice system. It also expresses concern at racial disparities in academic achievement, which contribute to unequal access to employment opportunities (arts. 3 and 5 (e)).

The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to ensure equal access to education by, inter alia:

- (a) Developing and adopting a comprehensive plan to address racial segregation in schools and neighbourhoods, with concrete goals, timelines and impact assessment mechanisms;
- (b) Increasing federal funding for programmes and policies that promote racially integrated learning environments for students;
- (c) Effectively implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the Equity and Excellence Commission published in February 2013;
- (d) Re-authorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with provisions that support and encourage solutions to address school segregation;
- (e) Continuing to work closely with state and local education authorities as well as civil society groups to strengthen measures to address the factors that contribute to the educational achievement gap.