

**RESOLUTION TO DECLARE RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS
AS IT ADVERSELY IMPACTS OUR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, STAFF, AND
COMMUNITY AT LARGE**

Whereas, the Board of Education of the Decatur Public School District #61 (DPS61) in Macon County, Illinois ("Board"), is a public school system within Macon County; and

Whereas, there is a long history of racism, discrimination, and segregation within our country, beginning over 400 years ago when enslaved human beings from African countries and of African descent were brought to what would become the United States; and

Whereas, this history has negatively impacted health, educational, and economic outcomes for many racial groups, and specifically Blacks; and

Whereas, extensive peer-reviewed research demonstrates that this history has had a lasting detrimental impact on the educational outcomes of Black students and other students of color through curriculum, discipline, and school climate; and

Whereas, racism has been determined to be a social determinant of health inequities through its direct physiological impact on individual and population health, as well as indirectly through its impact on educational, socioeconomic, and other social structures which can lead to negative long-term health outcomes; and

Whereas, the Board acknowledges that our students are a diverse body of which 47% are Black; 35.6% are white; 4.1% are Latinx; 0.6% are Asian; 12.3% are multi-racial; 0.4% identify as another race, all with diverse experiences (*2019 Illinois Report Card*). Similarly, our DPS61 employees (full time and part time) are a diverse body of which 15.7% are Black; 81.4% are white; 0.9% are Latinx; 1.16% are Asian; 0.7% are multi-racial; 0.15% identify as another race, all with diverse experiences (*DPS Human Resources, July 2020*). Finally, our Decatur community is a diverse body of which 20.5% are Black; 71.4% are white; 2.8% are Latinx; 0.9% are Asian; 6.2% are multi-racial; 0.3% identify as another race, all with diverse experiences (*2019 United States Census Bureau*); and

Whereas, students of color lag behind white students on measures of academic achievement by 15% in reading 10% and math (*2019 results; www.isbe.net*); and

Whereas, the Board desires to further implement vigorous actions and share stronger statements recognizing all students who are entrusted in our care; and

Whereas, the Board desires to continue to live out its mandate and responsibility, as outlined in Policy 2:20 Powers and Duties of the Board to, "Evaluating the education program, and approving School Improvement and District Improvement Plans," "Establishing student discipline policies designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning, including hearing individual student suspension or expulsion cases brought before it;" and "Communicating the schools' activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE DECATUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT #61 THAT:

Section I - The Board hereby declares that racism is a public health crisis that negatively impacts our students, our families, our community, and our staff; the Board hereby declares its commitment to establishing, supporting, and sustaining a culture of anti-racism districtwide.

Section II - The Board directs its Board Policy Committee, in collaboration with student ambassadors and members/graduates of the DPS Parent Leadership Training Institute (*PLTI*), to develop a racial equity policy to guide our district's equity work in an effort to reduce the effects of racism on our Black, Latinx and other marginalized students, families, staff, and community.

Section III - Representatives of the DPS Teaching and Learning Team, along with member(s) of the Board, will develop or revise policies and protocols that integrate additional racially and culturally relevant content, along with anti-racism instruction, into the curriculum. Additionally, this team will bring forward recommendations around the implementation of an aligned, culturally responsive social-emotional learning curriculum. This team will also review and decide if "College African-American History" should be a general education course, as opposed to its current status as a general elective course, or if there is a better way to achieve the desired result of including such history in our curriculum and bring a recommendation before the Board. Similarly, this team will address course naming and bring any recommendations of revisions to the Board.

Section IV - The Board requests the Calendar Committee to recognize Juneteenth as a district holiday in the district calendar. The Board requests the Calendar Committee recognize the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day. Moving forward, the Board requests that the Calendar Committee reach out to various populations represented in our District to ensure our calendar is inclusive of important cultural holidays celebrated by our students, their families, our staff, and our community.

Section V - Representatives of the DPS Teaching and Learning Team, along with member(s) of the Board, will determine how to best recognize and honor the lives and history of local and national Indigenous Peoples and the impact that history has had on their heritage within our curriculum. Additionally, this team will seek to strengthen Board policies around racist and offensive imagery in our classrooms and school buildings.

Section VI - The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee(s) to conduct expanded mandatory diversity and inclusion, equity, cultural relevancy, and implicit bias training, to the extent it is not already being provided to district administration, teachers and staff (in accordance to their representative contracts) and all volunteers (including all members of the Board of Education), guest teachers, and pre-certified teachers who serve our students.

Section VII - The Board directs the Superintendent to aggressively recruit and develop teachers and staff who reflect the diversity of our students. The Superintendent should submit an annual report to the Board outlining the hiring and promotion trends and practices among racial groups inside DPS61, including information regarding the racial composition of those hired from outside of the district for open positions.

The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee(s) to identify the person(s) specifically responsible for planning and implementing the marketing and strategy of recruitment and retention of Black educators.

Section VIII - The Board directs the Superintendent to prepare an annual report to the Board that highlights successes inside and outside the classroom and outlines challenges including: the number of complaints received from teachers, staff, parents, students or community members regarding racial bias, the status of the investigation and the general outcome of each complaint, while maintaining individual privacy and confidentiality. The Board directs the Superintendent to provide quarterly updates to the Board with this information.

Section IX - Representatives of the DPS Student Services Team, along with the Discipline Action Committee, and member(s) of the Board, will work directly with administrators, teachers, students, and families to provide a recommendation to the Board for a revised discipline and safety system that protects the physical, mental, and social health of students and staff through a culturally responsive, restorative justice model that prioritizes the goal of involving the Decatur Police Department only in emergent violent crises.

Section X - The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee(s) to publish student rights and responsibilities on every campus where School Resource Officers (SRO) are assigned and to increase training for teachers, principals, and administrators on their responsibilities to provide fair and equitable discipline that prioritizes the physical and mental health of all students and staff. The Board requests a discussion that includes the voices of a representative group of students, the Chief of Police, and other district stakeholders, accompany the SRO contract as it is presented to the Board annually to make informed decisions on the role of armed police officers in our schools.

Section XI - The Board directs its Board Policy Committee to draft a policy that establishes Employee Resource Groups (or, affinity groups) focused on intentionally supporting and improving retention, morale, professional growth, and opportunities for teachers and staff to collaborate in a supportive, affirming atmosphere. Additionally, the Board directs the Superintendent or their designee(s) to work with our nearly 1,300 employees to begin gathering feedback regarding the establishment of Employee Resource Groups (or, affinity groups).

Section XII - The Board directs the DPS Teaching and Learning Team, along with the DPS Student Services Team, to regularly report to the Board and make public (while maintaining individual student privacy and confidentiality) the educational outcomes of students of color specific to curriculum, discipline, opportunities, and social climate.

Section XIII - Be it hereby resolved that the Board expects policy recommendations, as outlined in this resolution, to be brought forth for discussion and ratification at the second scheduled Board meeting in October 2020; be it further resolved that the Board will evaluate district progress toward the goals above and will revisit every six (6) months, with its first evaluation to be held at the second scheduled Board meeting in March 2021.

Section XIV - It is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of the Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were adopted in an open meeting of the Board.

**Adapted from Akron Public Schools Board Resolution #20-065 (June 8, 2020) and the
Champaign Unit School District #4 Resolution (June 24, 2020)*

ADOPTED this 4th day of August 2020, by the following roll-call vote:

AYES: Andrew Taylor, Beth Creighton, Dan Oakes, Beth Nolan, Regan Lewis,
Kendall Briscoe

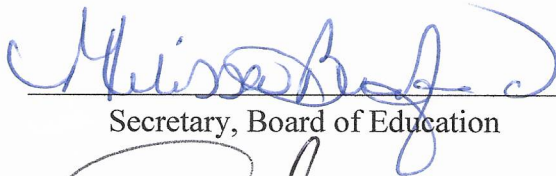
NAYS: None

ABSENT: Courtney Carson

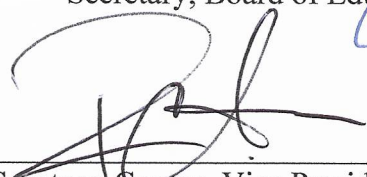


President, Board of Education


ATTEST:



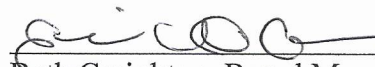
Secretary, Board of Education



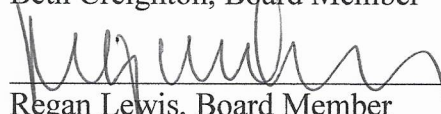
Courtney Carson, Vice President



Kendall Briscoe, Board Member



Beth Creighton, Board Member



Regan Lewis, Board Member



Dan Oakes, Board Member



Andrew Taylor, Board Member