

**KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION**

**AFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY
IN KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, the vision of the Kentucky Board of Education is to ensure that each student is empowered and equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful in a complex and competitive world.

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Board of Education resolutely stands against all acts of racism and violence.

WHEREAS, this unique and historic moment in our country's evolution presents an opportunity and a challenge for all of us to be part of creating a better educational community for students – and importantly – for African-American students and students of color.

WHEREAS, our Commonwealth's public schools have a history of racial inequity. Even today, students and staff of color – particularly African-American students and staff – are often left out of the conversation and remain unheard.

WHEREAS, academic achievement gaps prove to be pernicious challenges that have not been successfully eliminated. Even with the progress we have made in recent decades with increases in achievement overall, there has been no significant reduction in closing such gaps between racial groups. In fact, in some school districts gaps have widened.

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Board of Education is committed to delivering on its core promises to every member of our public-school system. Every child deserves a high-quality education. Every staff member deserves to be respected in the workplace. Every voice deserves to be heard.

WHEREAS, we believe that educational leaders must embrace diversity, assure equality and shape the future of all of Kentucky's children. The Kentucky Board of Education is dedicated to tackling racism through support of inclusionary teacher preparation programs that put highly qualified teachers of color in front of students and school improvement options for local districts to close achievement gaps.

WHEREAS, every student in the Commonwealth deserves equitable access to excellent educators who have unique experiences and perspectives, quality preparation, and are committed to the success of all learners. Kentucky's education leaders have a shared responsibility to deliver a high-quality education to all students. Together, with deliberate action and shared commitment, we can deliver on that promise.

WHEREAS, the initiatives that promote the development of a teaching population that reflects the makeup of the student population have fallen woefully short. According to the Kentucky School Report Card, Kentucky's African American teacher workforce during the 2018-2019 school year was a mere 3.33%. That percentage is conspicuously low when compared to Kentucky's African-American student population at 10.6%.

WHEREAS, pursuant to KRS 158.649 and 703 KAR 5:225, every school in Kentucky must annually develop, review and revise a comprehensive school improvement plan that includes biennial targets, strategies, activities and a time schedule calculated to eliminate the achievement gap among various groups of students to the extent that such a gap exists. Accordingly, the Kentucky Department of Education must provide districts and schools with knowledge, resources and technical assistance for their use, and to monitor them in planning and implementation of their strategies and activities to help close the achievement gap.

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the Commonwealth must make a concerted effort to address the social and emotional health of our students and staff. As we confront the convergence of serious racial unrest and a global pandemic, we know that many members of our education family - children, youth and adults - will return to school this fall experiencing some level of trauma. Mental health must be at the forefront of all our decision-making.

WHEREAS, we stand firm in these beliefs and our resolve to bring about meaningful change in all Kentucky public schools. Without such change, socioeconomic and racial opportunity gaps that have existed for decades will undoubtedly continue.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kentucky Board of Education will amplify our voice in support of minority students, their families and minority educators. We will not only listen to their concerns and aspirations, but we pledge to leverage those concerns and aspirations to inform our actions.

BE IT RESOLVED, that we call on educators, schools and districts to commit to listening to those seeking to be heard and to ensure that young people of color feel valued and safe in school and the community. We challenge our schools, districts, local boards of education, educational cooperatives, parents and families, and communities to join together to break down the barriers that stand between students of color and the equitable education they deserve. We envision a future where all educational leaders actively engage minority voices within their communities to influence decisions.

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge all schools to examine the *Kentucky Framework of Best Practices for School Counselors*, released by the Kentucky Department of Education on June 2, 2020. This framework is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth and helps to reimagine and realign the roles and responsibilities of school counselors so they can better meet the immediate needs of our students. We call on all education personnel to focus on the mental health needs of our students, provide more individual and small-group counseling services, and increase care for the “whole child” -- because we know that a child who is hurting cannot learn.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Kentucky Board of Education asks the Kentucky General Assembly to recommit to the provisions of KRS 161.165 which outlines the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce by restoring funding for programs like the Kentucky Academy for Equity in Teaching (KAET). The KAET is dedicated to recruiting and retaining minority teachers.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Kentucky Board of Education encourages education leaders across the Commonwealth to examine policies, procedures and funding decisions to ensure children of every race have equal access to educational opportunities. We urge district leaders to think unconventionally and innovatively to serve all students because conventional methods clearly have

not yielded the results we need, dismantle racism in our schools and ensure that educational equity becomes reality for every Kentucky learner in every Kentucky classroom.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Kentucky Board of Education calls on our Commissioner of Education to continue and reinvigorate the work of the Kentucky Department of Education to foster a culture of anti-racism and further racial equality within our public schools.

ADOPTED BY THE KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

___ 10th day of July, 2020 ___

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_____, Chair
Kentucky Board of Education