

The blatant and brutal killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others, has made today's current inequalities impossible to ignore. In response to world-wide protests, we've experienced the demand for an end to the injustices that continue to plague people of color still today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For too long now, systemic racism and inequities have been imbedded in policies and practices at the local, state and Federal level. Racism lives not only in people but in the systems and services intended to serve families and communities.

Protests happening all over the world are shining the light on the inequalities, unifying communities everywhere and creating a collective moral impetus for action. Given this important opportunity in our history, **I'm joining with thousands of parents and citizens across the country to request a revamping of our education system and school policies.**

For the past two decades, we have employed a model of school accountability that punishes low-income and people of color and rewards wealth in predominantly white communities. The practice of test-based accountability is a re-creation of the Eugenics movement where racially biased standardized tests are used to sort and track students. The results of test-based accountability have resulted in the closing of schools in low-income communities, segregation, the retention of students of color, firing of teachers, reduction of resources, narrowing of curriculum and continued cultures of oppression that devalue the lives of children.

For too long, school leaders have been complicit in the ratings game of insecurity. While some may for a short time look like "winners," accountability policies are perpetuating a divide between the haves and the Have NOTs. Standardized tests, correlated to income, reward a dominant white culture and call it achievement. These test-based accountability measures and standardized curriculums bring great harm to the most marginalized children. We must stop the policies and practices of comparisons and exclusions. Classrooms serve as the birth place of Democracy. If equity and equality don't begin here, then where in society will these values live?

Because you are an important member of our school leadership, in a position of influence and authority, I am asking you to move beyond words and platitudes and take decisive action in the following areas:

- **Decouple** all measures of accountability from standardized tests including school ratings, teacher evaluations and student indicators of ability and performance
- **Cease** the administration of all racially biased and income correlated standardized test measures such as PARCC and state-mandated tests
- **Adopt** a culturally conscious and competent curriculum which includes social justice
- **Allocate** targeted resources for at-risk children with an emphasis on prevention and intervention. Weighted funding should be directed at poverty (the root of the achievement gap)
- **Provide** full budget transparency and ensure all private donations and fundraising is equitably distributed throughout district neighborhood schools
- **Offer** economic incentives and loan forgiveness to attract educators of color and dual language speakers ensuring educators resemble their student body demographic
- **Ban charter schools, vouchers, and education tax credits** guaranteeing public monies (tax dollars), remain in public schools (where no student is excluded), with public oversight (managed by 'elected' school boards)
- **Protect** student data privacy and prohibit student data from being sold for profit or marketing
- **Ensure** parental rights and Opt Out provisions
- **Decrease** class sizes and restore autonomy and authority to professional educators
- **Remove** the police presence from our institutions of learning, spending less on enforcement and more on opportunity
- **Exercise** community-based decision making. Teachers, students, parents and community know what's best for a system of education that works for ALL

Let this painful moment in our nation's history serve as the flame that it is. Allow these earlier seeds of injustice to illuminate our way forward, so we may finally live up to the promise of public education as the Great Equalizer it was intended, where the meaning for democracy is learned and lived in every classroom and every child.

Thank you,