

August 2020, SASI Item 6, Action on Resolution 2021R-010 by Directors Miller and Baez on Black Lives Matter Week of Action

As Adopted August 27, 2020

WHEREAS, In April 2015, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors adopted the Black Lives Matter resolution and followed with the Black Lives Matter at School resolutions in 2018 and 2019; and

WHEREAS, The Black Lives Matter resolution identified the need to end racism and to tear down the systems of white supremacy in schooling, policing and much more; and

WHEREAS, The 2019 resolution called for an advisory committee to advance the work which lead to a coalition of the Black Educators Caucus, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Metropolitan Milwaukee Alliance of Black School Educators, Milwaukee Community Schools Partnership, SURJ Milwaukee, Leaders Igniting Transformation, Black and Latino Male Achievement, the Superintendent's Advisory Council, and Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope which led to a successful week of action in February of 2020; and

WHEREAS, The national Black Lives Matter movement, in the past, has called for a week of "Black Lives Matter at School Week" to focus on the need to:

- replace harsh zero-tolerance discipline policies, which disproportionately suspend students of color, with a Restorative Justice practices
- establish African American studies and other critical ethnic studies in all schools
- increase the hiring, training and support of Black teachers and other teachers of color
- "fund counselors, not cops;" and

WHEREAS, There has been some success in MPS with—

- ending contracts with the Milwaukee Police Department
- increased funding for counselors, social workers, nurses, psychologist and trauma care specialists
- increased funding for ethnic studies
- increased hiring and training of Black and Brown teachers largely through MPSU
- expansion of training staff in Restorative Justice practices; and

WHEREAS, The progress made in the last 5 years, since the adoption of Black Lives Matter policy, is far short of the anti-racism transformation that was intended and still necessary; and

WHEREAS, A key issue needed to be addressed with MPS's Black Lives Matter work is the reduction of the disciplinary actions of suspensions and expulsions for Black and Brown students; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the district again hold a week of action in coordination with the national Black Lives Matter at School movement, encouraging dress in BLM attire the first month of school, and that there be a review of the BLM at school reflection questions; and that school

staff begin to draft their school's annual anti-racist action plan with a quarterly report; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS establish a campaign for the whole year, beginning the first week of school, with the purpose of integrating the demands and actions of the Black Lives Matter at School program into every school and classroom; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS will reach out to other movements of people of color fighting racism, to support the week of action and year-long campaign; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the month of September opening week of school and each month of the school year be done with educational anti-racist, social justice activities celebrating the activists and martyrs (George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Dontre Hamilton, Joel Acevedo, Earnest Lacy, and many more) of the fight for racial justice; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the administration will re-assemble the 2020 coalition, to act as an advisory committee, for A Week of Action and a Year of Purpose, and will expand the coalition to other community and labor groups and individuals and MPS educators; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the administration will, with input from the advisory group, begin the process of integrating Black Lives Matter curriculum and principles, as part of our commitment to multi-culturalism into all areas of curriculum at all grade levels; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS aggressively expand the professional development of staff and the training of students in restorative justice practices; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That discussions and trainings targeting racism are to be held at every school throughout the year to include--

- creating safe spaces, community and parent involvement, and involvement of student leaders of all types;
- discussions of biases, racial micro-aggressions, fears, cultural and linguistic ignorance, and stereotypes of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other youth of color;
- discussions that lead to the professional development of school staffs in methods of de-escalation, mindfulness, creating a culture of trust, and how to weave cultural relevance, ethnic studies and anti-racism into all curricular areas and grade levels in developmentally appropriate ways;
- bringing community into our schools and strengthening schools as centers of support for communities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That student voice be included in professional development sessions when feasible; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS practice the concept of "Intersectionality" advanced by Black Lives Matter and other leaders which identifies an intersectional approach that acknowledges systemic discrimination due to race, economic status, immigration status, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation and identity, national origin, and ability, and that this systemic discrimination impacts access to opportunity.; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an advisory committee be established of students, community, community educators, parents, teachers, and school and administrative staff to assist in planning and implementation of the national Black Lives Matter at School program; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the advisory committee emphasize participation of students in planning that includes youth groups such as Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT), Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES), the school-based discipline committees, ACLU youth committees, the Community Schools Youth groups, the Superintendent's Advisory group, with an invitation to all MPS high schools to send student representation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration report monthly on this work to the Board through the appropriate committee.

Introduced July 30, 2020