

Resolution 2021R-010
Black Lives Matter Week of Action

By Directors Miller and Baez

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 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; and that the first day of school on the traditional start calendar be promoted as “Black to School,” encouraging dress in BLM attire 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; 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 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, etc.; and be it

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

Introduced July 30, 2020