



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT**

May 10, 2021

United States Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Via Email: OCR@ed.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a federal civil rights complaint pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) discrimination complaint resolution procedures.

Parents Defending Education (PDE) brings this complaint against Columbus City Schools (CCS or District) in Columbus, Ohio, for discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.*

PDE makes this complaint as an interested third-party organization that opposes racial discrimination and political indoctrination in America's schools. Attached to this complaint is supporting evidence in the form of a public statement posted by the Columbus Board of Education on April 21, 2021.

As the Columbus Board of Education notes, "systemic racism ... has existed for 175 years within the Columbus City Schools education system." Their statement goes on to acknowledge "There is systemic racism within our school district," "There is systemic racism within our education system," and "There is systemic racism within our school buildings."

As the Department of Education is no doubt aware, such an admission of "racism" from a district superintendent raises concerns that Columbus City Schools has received federal funds in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which declares that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity



receiving Federal financial assistance.” When the President of Princeton University made similar claims in an open letter to the University, *Ltr. from President Eisgruber on the University’s Efforts to Combat Systemic Racism* (Sept. 2, 2020), <https://bit.ly/2PHrvBY>, OCR swiftly opened an investigation, *Ltr. from Robert King to President Eisgruber* (Sept. 16, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3dIMORI>.

Accordingly, we ask that the Department promptly investigate the allegations in this complaint, act swiftly to remedy unlawful policies and practices, and order appropriate relief.

Thank you for your prompt assistance with this request for investigation and resolution. Please contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Neily".

Nicole Neily
President
Parents Defending Education

Enc. Exhibit A



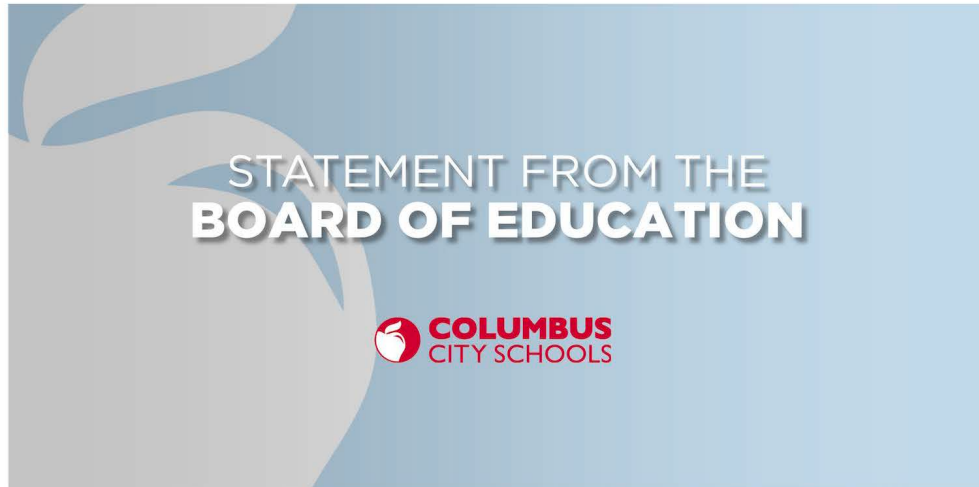
EXHIBIT A



Statement from the Columbus Board of Education

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STATEMENT FROM THE COLUMBUS BOARD OF EDUCATION



April 21, 2021 -- The events of yesterday continue to demonstrate the need for leaders, at all levels, to come together to address the very real issue of systemic racism in our Columbus community.

While the outcome of the Derek Chauvin trial is now one demonstration that the “system” can be held accountable, it certainly does not demonstrate that the system has been corrected or that there is true justice, as evidenced by the events that unfolded in our city that same day. Ma’Khia Bryant, a CCS student and Black Life, was killed in a police-involved shooting just moments before the verdict was announced in Minnesota. Her death compounded the hurt and pain felt by the CCS community as it was also the day we lost Tre Von Dickson, a CCS student killed by gun violence.

Their lives matter.

We stand with their families to call for, and be active participants in, justice and reform. “Thoughts and prayers” are no longer viable options or true expressions of support.

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Statement from the Columbus Board of Education

The Columbus Board of Education has taken a strong stance and has begun steps to end the systemic racism that has existed for 175 years within the Columbus City Schools education system. In partnership with *you*, our CCS community, we are doing the work and are dedicated to reform. We have called it out. We are taking action. We are developing culturally responsive staff and equitable policy. We are addressing inequities caused by how Columbus neighborhoods have historically been divided.

But our commitment to ending racism within our education system is not enough. Our district leadership, teachers, staff, students, and families are part of the Columbus community. We all deserve government systems free of racism and bias. Our school district is a piece of the larger system that is Columbus. To really understand and begin to address the historic nature of systemic racism and bias in Columbus, we must come together, call it out, and create a holistic plan of action as a city. Every system within our city must hold itself, and each other, accountable. We cannot work in silos to address these historical and systemic injustices.

Your Board of Education is calling it out and ready to take action to address systemic racism in Columbus. We are dedicated to the work of equity and the achievement of justice for every student, family, and member of our CCS and Columbus community. YOU matter.

There is systemic racism within our city.
There is systemic racism within our school district.
There is systemic racism within our criminal justice system.
There is systemic racism within our education system.
There is systemic racism within our police department.
There is systemic racism within our school buildings.

We are ready. We are acting. It is time for justice.

Black Lives Matter.

Jennifer Adair, Board President
Ramona R. Reyes, Board Vice President
Carol Beckerle, Board Member
Eric S. Brown, Board Member
Michael Cole, Board Member
Dr. Tina D. Pierce, Board Member
James Ragland, Board Member

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