

2.26 Dismantling Institutional and Systemic Racism

Resolution passed 2020

Whereas, systemic racism and historical dehumanization of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities is deeply embedded in every aspect of our society, including government, healthcare, our economy, housing, legal and justice systems, and our schools; and

Whereas, in 1970, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers came together as one association because they understood the power of unity in our efforts; and

Whereas, Washington State PTA recognizes and acknowledges that all children are affected by the wrongful deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, and too many others to name throughout history, and that we must know and honor their legacies. Washington State PTA's vision is that every child's potential becomes a reality, which can only happen in a just society that places equal value on every person's well-being, education, and safety. Every child means just that, every child; and

Whereas, National PTA "stands firmly against racism in all forms and the culture of oppression that permeates the United States" and "views the systemic harm, abuse and attack on individuals and communities of color and other marginalized groups in the United States reprehensible and as civil rights violations"; and

Whereas, PTA recognizes that it can either be a racist or anti-racist association, as there is no neutral space, and therefore must be committed to dismantling the systemic and institutionalized racism faced by BIPOC students and families and increasing authentic engagement with BIPOC families; and

Whereas, students benefit from educational environments, curricula, and instruction which truly honor and reflect their histories, cultures, experiences, and identities; and

Whereas, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, racial disparities persist in our education system: BIPOC youth have disproportionately lower access to preschool, higher rates of suspension from preschool onward, and limited access to advanced classes and college counselors compared to their white counterparts; and

Whereas, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee states "gaps are not due to our students' and families' failures, but rather the failed responsibility of our system"; and Washington state report card data shows disparate outcomes for BIPOC students in kindergarten readiness, meeting math, science, and English language arts standards, dual credit course completion, and graduation rates; and

Whereas, Washington state report card data also shows disparate outcomes by race in the percent of students who are excluded in response to a behavioral violation, as well as in the length of time students are excluded for out-of-school exclusionary discipline actions in schools; and

Whereas, Washington state enrollment data shows a large racial gap in the classroom between student and classroom teacher demographics; and evidence supports that having BIPOC teachers and educational leadership has positive effects on BIPOC students, including boosting overall academic performance, improving reading and math test scores, improving graduation rates, increasing aspirations to attend college, and reducing the number of absences.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils commit to being anti-racist and look within to end practices that adversely affect our BIPOC students, families, and communities by:

- Practicing anti-racism, equity, and inclusion in all decision-making; dismantling discriminatory practices and systems; and individually and collectively recognizing and addressing unconscious bias, belief gaps, and prejudice in our leadership, governing structure, and local PTA and member support
- Prioritizing and partnering with BIPOC consultants and compensating them for their intellectual capital, time, and expertise
- Conducting training and providing resources regarding anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and unconscious bias at all levels of PTA
- Conducting anti-racism and equity audits to review association policies and practices to remove implicit or explicit bias, institutional racism, and discrimination
- Actively recruiting, sharing power, and promoting full participation and authentic engagement of BIPOC families in PTA membership and leadership
- Promoting language access by providing printed and/or digital PTA resources translated in multiple languages; and removing language barriers during meetings (online and in-person) and with other oral communication practices
- Creating safe, welcoming, and healing-centered opportunities and environments for courageous conversations and listening sessions with historically marginalized BIPOC families as part of educating ourselves on their histories, cultures, experiences, and identities
- Creating partnerships with BIPOC community organizations, who have trusted relationships with families within our school community, to work with and among PTAs
- Creating and sustaining anti-racism, equity, and inclusion committees; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will collaborate with all district and school staff to end institutional and systemic racism in our schools by prioritizing, implementing, supporting, and sustaining:

- Meaningful and ongoing anti-racist and anti-bias training, including professional development on social emotional learning and healing-centered engagement, for all educators and staff, as well as anti-racist and anti-bias pre-teacher training.
- Explicitly anti-racist curricula, teaching practices, and school library materials that honor the histories, cultures, traditions, identities, and perspectives of BIPOC communities, including ethnic studies content and pedagogy that is student-centered and offers counter-narratives to current, Eurocentric curricula
- Anti-racist school district policies, including but not limited to support of BIPOC student activism and leadership, culturally responsible school building names and mascots, and anti-racism, equity, and inclusion committees

- Recruitment and retention of, and removal of barriers for, BIPOC educators, administrators, and school board members
- School cultures that honor, respect, reflect, and are welcoming to BIPOC students and staff
- Language access by providing printed and digital materials for families translated in multiple languages; and removing language barriers during school and district meetings (online and in-person) and with other oral communication practices
- Partnerships with trusted community organizations that work with BIPOC students and families
- Accurate identification of and services and resources for BIPOC students and families that also receive or should receive special education services
- Authentic student assessment metrics that honor the brilliance of BIPOC students; eliminate potential assessment barriers, biases, and discriminatory practices
- Education and engagement for BIPOC students and families that remove barriers to early learning programs and post-secondary education and pathways; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate at all levels to:

- Identify and dismantle unjust and discriminatory student disciplinary and zero-tolerance policies that perpetuate generational trauma and the school-to-prison pipeline
- Require comprehensive guidelines and anti-racist and anti-bias training for all school staff about when it is, or is not, appropriate to involve law enforcement or child protective services, and about the use of force by school resource officers, other law enforcement officers, security personnel, and staff; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate for anti-racist legislation and policies to end systemic and institutional racism, including but not limited to:

- Addressing funding and resource inequities to ensure allocations and supports reflect the needs of BIPOC and other underserved communities.
- Ensuring equity, eliminating discrimination, and combating racism in our government, public health, healthcare, economy, housing, legal and justice systems, and schools.