

RESOLUTION NO. 7861 – June 25th, 2020

BLACK LIVES MATTER

WHEREAS, the recent death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and subsequent protests across the globe have focused the nation’s attention on the issue of police brutality and pulled back the curtain on the many ways that systems and institutions have preserved and maintained white supremacy, and a culture that diminishes, devalues, and destroys the lives of Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, the names, faces, and stories that periodically pierce the awareness of the American public, and expose the ugly truth about racism in American society, are painful reminders of the countless unknown names, unseen faces, and untold stories that have borne the burden of this history; and

WHEREAS, public education is an essential democratic institution necessary for promoting the public welfare, developing human potential, and creating the conditions for a fair and just civic society, and Indianapolis Public Schools (“IPS”) has been charged with educating the future citizens and leaders of the City of Indianapolis since its incorporation in 1853; and

WHEREAS, Indianapolis Public Schools has often failed to fulfill its obligation to educate and serve all students equally, to advocate on behalf of every student, to live up to our highest ideals as a country and a school district, and to commit itself to dismantling the systems of racial inequality and injustice that have prevented generations of Black students from achieving their fullest potentials; and

WHEREAS, Indianapolis Public Schools has participated in maintaining a system of racial inequality in the City of Indianapolis through its actions and inactions, policies and practices, budgets and priorities, advocacy and silence, and by too often privileging the prejudice of white parents over the well-being of Black students; and

WHEREAS, Indianapolis Public Schools established a racially segregated educational system designed to reinforce an immoral racial hierarchy, by among other things, approving the creation of a high school for Black students in 1922 – originally planned as Thomas Jefferson High School, and subsequently renamed Crispus Attucks High School after the justified objections of Indianapolis’ black community – and forcefully transferring Black students then attending other IPS high schools; and

WHEREAS, despite the U.S. Supreme Court’s declaration in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 that “[s]eparate educational facilities are inherently unequal”, Indianapolis Public Schools maintained and defended a racially segregated educational system until the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit in 1968, and a federal court ruled in 1971 that IPS was “operating a segregated school system wherein segregation was imposed and enforced

by operation of law”, and ordered and supervised a busing program to facilitate the desegregation of Indianapolis Public Schools that wasn’t fully phased out until 2016; and

WHEREAS, the difficult and painful work of confronting our collective failure starts with acknowledging, and apologizing for, the ways in which Indianapolis Public Schools has perpetuated a system of white supremacy, failed to confront systemic racism, and remained silent in the presence of injustice; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Commissioners is committed to leading in the effort to address racism and its effects within our district and schools, through our budget, priorities, policies, practices, and by creating and supporting a culture that daily affirms that Black lives matter; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Commissioners will continue and expand ongoing efforts to identify and address racial disparities and disproportionalities in discipline and academic outcomes, expand equitable access to educational and programmatic opportunities, and examine policies and practices to ensure that their burdens and benefits do not reinforce existing inequalities; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Commissioners has approved recent efforts and initiatives to support the work of achieving racial equity within Indianapolis Public Schools, including:

- Partnering with the Racial Equity Institute to engage administrators, teachers, and staff in educational training on the history of racism in the United States, the impact of racism in education, and how to implement this knowledge into their efforts to achieve racial equity in their schools and classrooms (2015, renewed 2018);
- Restructuring the IPS Police department to reduce the number of officers in schools, implementing a revised continuum of force policy to minimize the incidence of use of force, and auditing all practices to identify and reduce racial disparities and prioritize student safety (2015-);
- Approving a Supplier Diversity Policy to increase business opportunities for minority-, women-, and veteran-owned business enterprises (M/W/VBEs), as well as locally owned and operated businesses, requiring all partners doing business with IPS to adopt Equal Employment Opportunity Clauses in all contracts with the district, and tracking and reporting progress on efforts to engage MWVBEs for eligible expenditures on a quarterly basis (2015);
- Establishing School Equity Teams, supported by a District Equity Team, in 29 pilot schools to review disaggregated academic and discipline data, facilitate study and discussion of racism, and to develop and track measurable goals towards racial equity (2015-);
- Prioritizing the recruitment and retention of Black teachers and school leaders through deliberate policies & programs, national candidate recruitment, and by identifying and supporting the development and licensure of Black classified classroom support staff to assist them in teacher education and licensure (2015-);

- Creating a unified enrollment structure to promote transparency and equitable access for families, and designing application deadlines to enhance equitable access to high demand schools and programs (2016);
- Designing and implementing a student-based budget allocation model to promote equitable and transparent funding of schools with additional funds targeted to support schools with greater demonstrated need (2016-);
- Approving uniform and reduced proximity boundaries for all choice schools to mitigate the impact of structural, racial housing segregation on access to high-demand choice schools and programs, and to promote enrollment diversity (2017);
- Supporting universal transportation throughout the district to reduce barriers to students and families to the choice programs and schools of their choosing;
- Adopting the “Males of Color Pledge” as part of the Council of Great City Schools’ (“CGCS”) Males of Color Initiative, developing the “Your Life Matters: Plan of Action”, and partnering with the Indianapolis Mayor’s Office, Indiana Black Expo, and the Indiana Civil Rights Commission to form the Your Life Matters Task Force to develop initiatives and interventions to support the unique challenges facing young men of color (2018);
- Including “Racial Equity Mindset” as one of the six district priorities for the 2019-20 school year (2019);
- Initiating a racial equity audit in collaboration with Promise 54 to help identify gaps and develop strategies for making progress towards racial equity in IPS (2020).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis that:

- 1) Black lives matter. Every student is capable of success, deserving of respect, and valuable to our community. To believe that black lives matter – and to put that belief into action – means to commit ourselves to a radical refusal to give up on any student, to hand them over to a criminal justice system that doesn’t share our values, or return them to communities that lack the resources to support the realization of their fullest potential. The rise in zero tolerance discipline policies by school districts has contributed to reinforcing existing racial inequalities and limiting the opportunities for Black students to achieve success. Except where such action is required by law - or in cases involving violence or the safety of other students and staff - Indianapolis Public Schools will seek to eliminate all expulsions or arrest of any students.
- 2) All students - of every race - benefit from Black teachers and Black leaders. Research demonstrates the positive impact of having teachers and school leaders with racial and cultural backgrounds that reflect the students that they teach, who serve as positive role models, and who hold their students to high expectations. Indianapolis Public Schools will continue to intentionally recruit, support the professional development of, and promote Black teachers and leaders.
- 3) Representation and recognition matters. Black students deserve to go to schools that celebrate the history of Black leaders and that champion the humanity and dignity of Black people. The district will establish a task force to review the names of all schools, facilities, and venues to ensure that the individuals so honored reflect respect for the dignity and equality of the students we serve. While we can’t demand an

unattainable perfection, and must acknowledge the historical context in which people lived and learned, we also can't expect progress without interrogating our assumptions, examining our past, and reconciling our values.

- 4) Understanding the ugly truth of our past is necessary to building a beautiful vision of our future. We can't value Black lives without teaching Black history, recognizing the contributions of Black leaders to our city, state, and country, and celebrating the sacrifices and achievements that were necessary for moving us closer to the fulfillment of America's promises. Indianapolis Public Schools will recognize June 19th ("Juneteenth") as a district holiday, recognizing the importance of the liberation of enslaved people as an achievement of American democracy to be celebrated and rightfully honored.
- 5) **Board Policy 1619 – RACIAL EQUITY MINDSET, COMMITMENT, AND ACTIONS** is hereby adopted as presented in conjunction with this resolution.

The foregoing Resolution No. 7861 was passed by the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis this 25th day of June, 2020.

THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

By: _____
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Presented and recommended with full support by:

Aleesia L. Johnson, IPS Superintendent