

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for your recent statement in response to systemic racism and injustice in our community and across the United States. A public statement acknowledging these issues and a call for equity and justice in our schools is an important first step in creating change. As a community of educators, parents, and students, we want to make sure that your public statement is not the first and last step, but that your words are backed up with concrete plans and policy changes that will bring real change.

Racism is more than just individual acts of meanness. It shows up in the policies and practices that lead to disproportionality. Kindness and color-blindness will not heal the deep wounds or repair the deep ruts of racism. Therefore, while we appreciate the statement that the district made, we join together with [SURJ-KC Education Core](#), [IUST Systems](#), [Elements of Education KC](#), [Kansas City Black Mental Health Initiative](#), [Latinx Education Collaborative](#), [Brothers Liberating Our Communities](#), [SURJ-KC Families](#), and [Racial Equity EdConnect](#) to call on you to make a systematic and sustained commitment to equity in the following ways:

- 1) Require all staff at all levels participate in anti-racist, anti-bias professional development for up to sixteen hours a year for the next five years (eight hours minimum). Avoid asking current BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) staff to perform uncompensated emotional labor in these efforts; contract with skilled and BIPOC consultants to facilitate this work.
- 2) Strategically ask staff, who are over 80% white, to start by examining their own racial identity development (e.g. *Waking Up White*, *White Fragility*, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*). Equip your staff to facilitate courageous conversations about racism in the classroom (e.g. *Not Light, But Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Race Conversations in the Classroom*). At least 2 book studies /year, 75% staff proficient on equity survey (create)
- 3) Integrate culturally responsive and culturally congruent teaching in teacher training and evaluation processes. Create a new evaluation sheet by (deadline _____) to have looked over and given feedback from SURJ and surrounding constituents.
- 4) Implement restorative practices that replace traditional exclusionary discipline (in-school and out-of-school suspensions, buddy rooms, and more), in order to reduce the gaps of disproportionate suspensions (Consult #RJLeagueChat). Decrease your suspensions of black and brown children by 50% over the next 5 years.
- 5) Remove police presence and metal detectors from schools (see Denver, Minneapolis, Portland, Madison). Audit frequency of referrals to law enforcement from SROs (School Resource Officers), budget commitments, and arrest and search frequency by race. By 2022 all metal detectors will be removed and police will be replaced with counselors and social workers. Audit will take place 1/year.
- 6) Transform curriculum, school libraries, and classroom libraries to include diverse, representative, inclusive texts. Consult #DisruptTexts, #WeNeedDiverseBooks, tolerance.org, rethinkingschools.org, and zinnproject.org. Audit English curriculum in each grade level for people of color, increase percentage by 25%.
- 7) Modify recruitment, hiring, and retention practices for staff of color, and set goals for 30% BIPOC representation at all levels. Include BIPOC leaders in this process, leveraging community relationships if HR does not currently include any BIPOC leaders.

- 8) Ensure equitable representation in honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and gifted, as well as special education. Analyze referral and accessibility policies. Include BIPOC leaders in this process, leveraging community relationships if district leadership does not currently include any BIPOC leaders.
- 9) Begin offering high school courses in ethnic studies and history, such as Latinx history, Mexican-American history, African-American history, and Asian/Pacific Islander history. Take audit of high school and middle school curriculum. Increase amount of cultural history by 30%. Replace 30% of white history with another group. Include people of color's perspectives in 30% of the already existing curriculum.
- 10) Encourage and amplify leadership of students and parents of color. Create parent/school/community liaison administrative position. Create student admin liaison position and committee to include student voice.
- 11) Create leadership positions and revise budgets to make these action steps achievable. Audit budget and ensure minimum 35% is directly in reach of these goals.
- 12) Annually share data, disaggregated by race, related to each of these action steps. Agree to annual assessment to be made public about your institution and its growth towards equity.

As a follow-up to your initial statement, we expect a plan with action steps detailing how you will commit efforts and resources to support your stance on equity and justice. We expect you to not only work to change beliefs, but also to [change actions and systems](#). We cannot wait any longer. All our students deserve an equitable and liberatory education.

We will be tracking each district's commitments to these action steps over the next two months, and comparing those to your initial equity statements. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[SURJ-KC Education Core](#)

[JUST Systems](#)

[Elements of Education KC](#)

[Kansas City Black Mental Health Initiative](#)

[Latinx Education Collaborative](#)

[Brothers Liberating Our Communities](#)

[SURJ-KC Families](#)

[Racial Equity EdConnect](#)

Erin Gingrich-Gaylord, KCPS Parent

Lauren Bouas, KCPS Teacher

Celeste Shepherd, Shawnee Mission

Stephanie Holcombe, Independence ISD 30 Parent

January Cook, Gardner Edgerton Community Member

Sarah Neher, KCPS Community Member

Alicia Vargas, Park Hill Parent

Kyleigh Sullivan, Park Hill Parent
Crystal Yakel-Kuntz, KCKPS Teacher
Cypress LaSalle, Blue Valley Parent
Ryan Fajardo, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Jessica Woodruff, Park Hill Parent
Bethany Duber, LSR7 Community Member
Kristen Allen, Park Hill Parent
Andrew Scott, LSR7 Parent
Martha Carmona-Luna, NKCS Parent
Sam Mahlstadt, LSR7 Parent
Jennifer Lacy, KCPS Parent
Amy Hansen-Malek, Olathe Parent
Emily Twyman Brown, Brookside Charter Administrator
Cambria Potter, KCPS
Kathy Cook, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Megan Galicia, KCMO Community Member
Kate Downey, Gardner Edgerton Community Member
Cate Eighmey, Olathe Parent
Allie Free, USD 204 Teacher
Micah Rose Emerson, KCPS Parent
Heather Harrison, KCPS Parent
Amber Finley, KCPS Teacher
Kelly Lightcap, KCPS Teacher & SMS Parent
Peggy Beddall, Leavenworth Community Member
Stacy Bell, Blue Valley Parent
Erin Sameck, Liberty Parent
Angie Winkler, Park Hill Parent
Clara Anderson Sainte, Center Parent
Quinn White, Blue Valley Teacher, SMSD Parent
Emily Bartlett, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Rayna Marshall, Olathe Parent
Elizabeth Bronk, KCPS Parent
Amanda Trout, KCPS Parent
Jessica Garrison, Olathe Parent
Michael Rebne, KCKPS Teacher, SMSD Parent
Margie Ramirez, KCKPS Teacher & Community Member
Taurean Hamm, KCKPS Teacher
Katie Jones, KCKPS Community Member
Joanna Mays, Blue Valley Teacher
Amy Harth, Olathe Community Member
Sarah Link Ferguson, Shawnee Mission Parent
Joan Saltzman, KCPS Community Member
Hilary Tramel, Independence Teacher
Shawna Sayar, Raymore Peculiar Parent

Sarah McCoy-Harms, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Alexandra Arnold, KCPS parent
Amy Imafidon, Parkhill Parent
Laurie Dolezal, Lee's Summit Parent
Meeka Gentry, KCKPS Counselor
Dan Eigenberg, Blue Valley Teacher
Stacia Mitchell, Shawnee Mission Parent
Jami Evans Arreola, KCPS Parent & Community Member
Kate Carter-Brown, Olathe Teacher
Nancy Gall, Parent
Althea Rollins, LSR7 Parent
Lauren Robinette, KCKPS Teacher
Teresa Stewart, Oak Grove Parent
Caitlin Webb, NKC Parent
Sarah Knopf-Amelung, NKC Parent
Vicki Webster, Shawnee Mission Parent
Raquel Craney, KCPS Community Member
Julie Brogno, Academie Lafayette Parent
Poro Kennedy, Olathe Community Member
Brittany Verrette, Blue Valley Parent and Advisory Board Member
Lindsay Smith, Independence Community Member
Sara Robbins, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Rossana Serres, Independence Parent
Lauren Wegley, Olathe Counselor
Rebecca Reece, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Katie Wehunt, Olathe Community Member
Lyndsey Stailey, KCPS Teacher
Delia Perez- Solorzano, KCKPS Teacher
Bailey Bacon, KCKPS Teacher & Community Member
Denise Todd, Blue Valley Parent
Stephanie Shade, Park Hill Parent
Nate Irby, Jackson County Community Member
Winifred Wright, KCPS Community Member
Amy Kenney, NKC Parent
Jessica Horine, Shawnee Mission Parent
Natalie Spicker, KCPS Community Member
Sarah Coddington, Olathe Parent & Teacher
Casey Jackson, KCKPS Teacher
Alyce Edwards, KCKPS Teacher
Ralph Kelley, KCKPS Teacher
Kim Randell, KCPS Parent
Nicole Dobronski, Blue Valley Teacher
Sheri Tindle, Independence Parent & Teacher
Debbie Ingram, Independence Parent

Lauren Wegley, Olathe Counselor
Hallie Richardson, Citizens of the World Teacher
Caitlin Daily, Citizens of the World Paraprofessional
Amy Ravis Furey, Blue Valley Parent
Casey Phillips, Independence Parent
Aaron Crossley, Independence Parent
Jeremy Ruzich, KCPS Community Member
Amber Rose, Independence Parent
Robbie Phillips, Independence Parent
John Tramel, KCPS Parent
Katrina Hawthorne, Citizens of the World Teacher
Vanessa Ramirez, Independence Student
Patrick Kobylinski, KCKPS Teacher
Alyce Edwards, KCKPS Teacher
Carolyn Hummel, KCKPS Teacher
Cecilia Belser-Patton, Lee's Summit Community Advocate
Jacqueline Sweet, Independence Teacher
Megan Williams, Shawnee Mission Parent
Billie Hufford, KCPS Community Member
Sheyvette Dinkens, KCKPS Teacher
Amy Lunde, KCKPS Teacher
Collin LaJoie, KCKPS Teacher
Jena Klaas, KCKPS Teacher
Jasmine Lowe, KCKPS Teacher
Katie Laich, KCPS Teacher
Emily Twyman Brown, Brookside Charter Administrator
Natasha Derakhshanian, KCKPS Community Member
Mandi Brehm, Liberty Paraprofessional
Ashley Swanson-Hoye, Center Parent
Jennifer Felten, Shawnee Mission Parent
Dusti Lyon Preul, Park Hill Parent
Ally Bittner, Olathe Parent
Nathaniel Bozarth, Olathe Community Member & Advocate
Angie Abunga, NKC Parent
Cynthia Cerrentano, Blue Valley Parent
Laura Belt, Academie Lafayette Parent
Laci Pittman, Blue Springs Parent
Elizabeth Ault, Shawnee Mission Parent & Teacher
Jenna Brofsky, Shawnee Mission Parent
Chandee Harper, Grain Valley R5 Parent
Jessie Demis, LSR7 Parent
Sonja Guzman, Park Hill Parent
Natalie Beer, Shawnee Mission Parent
Ellen Pajor, PK6 Community Member

Micah Gutweiler, KCPS Parent
Casey Bauer, NKC Parent
Jeanne Goodin, Park Hill Parent
Andrea Dalton, Center Parent
Colin Gonzalez, Citizens of the World Teacher
Beccah Rendall, KCPS Community Member
Billy Brame, KCKPS Teacher
Paige Smith, Crossroads Charter Administrator
Danna Suellentrop, KCPS Community Member
Colleen Cunningham, Blue Valley Parent
Lauren Higgins, KCPS Community Member
Laci Bostick, KCPS Community Member
Kevin Kinsella, KCKPS Teacher
Sydney Smith, KCPS Community Member
Katie Petrucci, KCPS Community Member
Beth Harrington, Shawnee Mission Parent
Nicole Harper, Academie Lafayette Parent
Jennifer Sandau, NKC Parent
Hannah Boehm, NKC Community Member
Courtney Young, KCPS Parent
Elizabeth Davis, Northeast Community Member
Mary Markiewicz, Blue Valley Parent
Lina Zarate, Center Community Member
Aly Englander, UMKC Student
Amanda Jolley, KCPS Community Member,
Megan Green, KCPS Teacher
Katie Brugger, KCKPS Teacher
Betsy Dixon, Grain Valley Community Member
Amanda Campbell, Academie Lafayette Parent
Christina Nowak, KCPS Community Member
Jamie Sperry, Shawnee Mission Community Member
Karen Walker, Shawnee Mission Parent
Tamara Wolfe, Citizens of the World Teacher
Nehemiah Rosell, KCPS Community Member
Katie Meinke, KCPS Parent
Heather Myer, Academie Lafayette Parent
Hilary Lemon, KCPS Parent
Rob Santel, Olathe Parent
Laura Hayden, Olathe Parent
Courtney Grimaldi, Blue Valley Media Specialist
Sarah Lee, Blue Valley Teacher
Ian Frazier, Blue Valley Teacher
Rachel Kendrick, Blue Valley Teacher
Joe Geist, Blue Valley Teacher

Jennifer Smith, Blue Valley IC

Anne Harvey, Blue Valley Media Specialist

Joe Stuever, Blue Valley Teacher

Lisa Bauman, Blue Valley Teacher

Katherine Prout, Blue Springs Community Member

Sarah Haberberger, NKC Parent