



Action Guide & Resource Kit on Demand #7

Demand #7: Students must be equipped to analyze the United States' history of injustice, white supremacy and inequality and respond as critical civic actors. School curriculums must decenter whiteness through accurate portrayals of social and political history that dissect the United States' history of systemic oppression and highlight the resistance and resilience of marginalized groups, as well as communicate national history in global context. Schools should prioritize preparing students to be active participants in their communities by providing them with the resources and knowledge to engage directly through a diversity of tactics, including community organizing, mutual aid support, mobilizing protest networks, encouraging donations, voting and more. This includes registering and pre-registering eligible students to vote and informing students about how COVID-19 has impacted civic processes. [Read the Move School Forward campaign's full list of demands here.](#)

Call to Action:

The Education Justice Collective is calling on students and adult allies nationwide to contact school administration and local school boards demanding the implementation of demand #7. Even if decision makers are resistant to immediate action, bringing these resources to teachers, administrators and school board officials can start a critical youth-adult dialogue about incorporating social justice and civic action into curriculum. [Share on social media when you've done this encouraging students to join you!](#)

[Click here to see a sample letter to edit and send to your school board and administrators.](#)

Before You Begin:

- The first step to taking action is to get acquainted with the local power landscape in your community. **Student Voice's** [school board action guide](#) can help you get started in understanding who holds power that affects your education.
- The **Education Justice Collective's** digital organizing community exists to answer questions and build strategy with students across the country who are interested in making change. You can join [Student Voice's District Direct Action program](#) to gain support as you take action.



- The most popular ways to contact school boards are to **testify at public meetings** and **write letters/ emails directly to members**. School board members emails should be publicly available on your school districts website. Because of COVID-19, many school board members are meeting online, so you'll need to check the website regularly to see when the soonest meeting is. Meetings typically have limits to how long you speak, so if you testify you should follow up with a written email to ensure they have all the details, resources and research, and so they know how to contact you.
- Administrators are typically reached by email. Especially as we head towards school reopenings, it can be hard to reach administrators directly. Check your school's website to see if there's an administrative aide that works for your principal or assistant principal and add them all to the email. It's a good idea to also include a teacher ally if you have one, but be sure to give them a heads up!

Letter Writing Guide

Opening

- *For Board Members:*
 - You can choose to address the letter to the entire board, or single out specific members that you have a geographic association with your community.
 - Introduce yourself, what school you go to and what grade you're in.
- *For Administrators:*
 - Address it to your principal and/ or assistant principal, and copy administrative aides and teacher allies.
 - Introduce yourself, your grade and something you're involved in at the school community/ something you're passionate about so that they get a sense of who you are.

Introducing the issue

- Explain why you are writing. Why is this issue important to you?
 - **You can include that you're part of a community taking action across the country in solidarity with the Move School Forward campaign.** Share that the campaign demands were written directly by students from across the country, and that the site includes research and case studies for each demand. You can link the site as a resource at www.moveschoolforward.org
 - You can also include that the campaign demands have been **endorsed** by the Partnership for the Future of Learning, the Aspen Institute Education and



Society Program, Youth Service America and many other adult-led organizations.

- **Include demand #7 in your own words and why it is important to you.** This may include sharing a story of personal experience or including commentary on America's history of systemic racism, and the recent uprisings for Black liberation that are pushing this issue to the forefront.
- It's also a good idea to recognize any positive actions specific board members have taken in the past that relate to demand #7 and to thank them.

Providing resources

- Board members are more likely to take action if you also provide them with the resources they need to do so.
 - [Teaching Tolerance](#), a leading 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has developed social justice standards that serve as a framework for anti-bias education for every age group. Share their [social justice standards](#) and resources directly with your school board as a concrete way to implement change in local education. They also provide [lesson plans](#), [professional development](#) and [storytelling resources](#).
 - [The Zinn Education Project](#) also has [teaching materials](#) that integrate a people's history into the curriculum.
- One of the biggest resources decision makers have at their disposal is the student body. Urge decisionmakers to consider young people as natural partners in making education more relevant, accessible and justice-focused through [student-adult partnership](#).

Call to action

- Close with stating your long-term call to action, that decision makers implement demand #7, and a short-term call to action, that decision makers schedule a follow up conversation with you and a representative group of students, to talk more about this issue.

Sample Letter:

Hello [Board Members] or [School Administrators],

My name is [NAME] and I'm a rising [YEAR] grader at [SCHOOL]. I'm excited to [REPLACE with your interests, **ex:** *join my second year of high school, take an art elective and play on the JV soccer team*]. I hope this email finds you safe and healthy during these intense and uncertain times. I wanted to reach out because **I am passionate about education**



equity, specifically ensuring that we have anti-racist curriculums and pedagogy in our school.

I'm joining a community of students taking action across the country to ensure we prioritize equity in school reopenings. The Move School Forward campaign details 10 principles written directly by students nationwide that we should act upon this fall and includes case studies and research that you can see at www.moveschoolforward.org. The principles have been endorsed by the **Partnership for the Future of Learning**, the **Aspen Institute Education and Society Program** and **Youth Service America**. I'm specifically passionate about **principle #7**, which reads:

Students must be equipped to analyze the United States' history of injustice, white supremacy and inequality and respond as critical civic actors. School curriculums must decenter whiteness through accurate portrayals of social and political history that dissect the United States' history of systemic oppression and highlight the resistance and resilience of marginalized groups, as well as communicate national history in global context. Schools should prioritize preparing students to be active participants in their communities by providing them with the resources and knowledge to engage directly through a diversity of tactics, including community organizing, mutual aid support, mobilizing protest networks, encouraging donations, voting and more. This includes registering and pre-registering eligible students to vote and informing students about how COVID-19 has impacted civic processes.

This principle matters to me because I care about racial justice. The uprisings over the past few months for Black liberation have been powerful and inspiring to me, and I'd like our school to teach me more about the United State's history of injustice so that I can better understand ways to take constructive action to make positive change in our school and community. I wanted to share with you some resources to make this happen. [Teaching Tolerance](#) has developed [social justice standards](#), [lesson plans](#) and [professional development](#) to implement anti-bias education, **and these are actionable on the school level and don't require intense policy change to make a difference in students' educations.**

Your student body is also a great resource for making change. I hope that you will reach back out to me to schedule a meeting to learn more about why principle #7 matters to me, and that you'll consider working with young people in our [school/ school district] as [authentic partners](#) to push us to a more equitable education system.

I look forward to talking soon!

Thank you,
[NAME]



Learning Resources:

- [Explore Teaching Tolerance's social justice standards, a framework for anti-bias education for every age group.](#)
- [Read Lies My Teacher Told Me by James W. Loewen to learn how whitewashed history perpetuates contemporary injustice.](#)
- [Learn how students in Arizona organized to protect their Ethnic Studies program from being eliminated.](#)
- [Check out When We All Vote's "My School Votes" Initiative.](#)

Follow Move School Forward on [Instagram](#) & [Twitter](#) for coverage and updates!