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Washington Education Association

Black Lives Matter Resolution

November 7, 2020

WHEREAS, protests have swept the nation as citizens demand justice in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and far too many others; and

WHEREAS, the brutalization and killing of Black persons, including queer, transgender, gender non-conforming persons, is an unacceptable violation of the human rights due to all people; and

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement, like the civil rights and Black Power movements before it, has effectively articulated the injustices that exist at the intersections of race, class, and gender; including mass incarceration, police brutality, poverty, discriminatory housing practices, income disparity, homophobia, transphobia, gender inequality, poor access to healthcare, and educational outcomes; and

WHEREAS, in a 2019 Pew Center survey, 84% of Black adults said that, in dealing with police, Black people are generally treated less fairly than whites; and 87% of Blacks and 61% of whites said the U.S. criminal justice system treats Black people less fairly; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, Blacks represented 12% of the U.S. adult population but 33% of the prison population, while Whites accounted for 64% of adults but 30% of the prison population; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, Black children make up 15% of the overall child population; however, they represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court, and are 2.3 times as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest as white students; and

WHEREAS, nationwide Black students are nearly two times as likely to be suspended without educational services as white students; Black students are also 3.8 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white students; and

WHEREAS, addressing the needs of Black learners requires recognition of the inherent value of Black students, families, and educators; and

WHEREAS, through the collective action of labor unions *Bargaining for the Common Good*, working people have used their power to help better the lives of others by promoting policies that confront inequality, that improve the pillars of opportunity—such as public education, healthcare, fair wages, and housing—and that improve the quality of life in our communities; and

WHEREAS, within the Washington Education Association (WEA) and public school districts in Washington there are still many structures and symbols that uphold a legacy of racism, oppression, exclusion, and inequality; and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that self-empowered people of color are key to the eradication of institutional racism (CR I-1); and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that white allies and accomplices play an integral role in this work and the progress towards advancing racial justice (CR I-1); and

WHEREAS, the WEA supports the promotion of the civil, professional, and human rights of all members (CR I-13); and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that education must develop respect for the rights of all and opposes all forms of discrimination (CR I-13); and

WHEREAS, the WEA supports programs and instruction that encourages individuals to seek greater understanding of other people's perspectives and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and dignity (CR I-13); and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that no person should be discriminated against on the basis of age, creed, disability, ethnic background, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation, or size (CR I-13); and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that the philosophy of not seeing color, often referred to as being "color blind" is detrimental to advancing the cause of racial justice (CR I-13); and

WHEREAS, the WEA believes that the norms, standards, and structures manifested in White supremacy culture perpetually exploit and oppress Black people and serve as detriments to racial justice (CR I-16).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the WEA hereby supports and believes Black Lives Matter.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WEA has a commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that as a symbol of WEA's ongoing commitment to focus unerringly on the success of Black students, educators, and WEA staff, and to serve as a visible affirmation of the movement for racial equality in the United States, a Black Lives Matter banner shall be displayed prominently at WEA headquarters, to display from the WEA flagpole.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WEA encourages state-wide participation in the Black Lives Matter at School Week from February 1-5, 2021 and that Black history be a fundamental, year-round component of all K-12 learning.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WEA believes that our education systems, from teacher preparation programs to classrooms, as well as our state and local governing entities, actively work towards creating anti-racist systems and eradicating anti-Blackness in all aspects.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the WEA commits itself not only to address the symbols of institutional racism and white supremacy, but also to proactively identify and address biases, practices, policies, and institutional barriers that perpetuate injustice and inequality in our union, schools, and our communities.