



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 20, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Social Justice & Anti-Racist Educator Efforts and Resources

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is pleased to share three efforts to combat racism and promote social justice.

First, the State Board of Education approved a resolution on the eradication of racism and the creation of more equitable and inclusive schools at its June board meeting. You may find this resolution, approved in June at this [link](#).

Second, State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice convened groups of students and educators, nominated by local superintendents, to engage in discussions about how we can work toward the eradication of racism in our schools with students and educators as partners.

Initial conversations have occurred, and more are expected. MDE is working to flesh out an agenda of the challenges and opportunities identified. This effort includes the sharing of diverse representative literature and instructional materials and practices so that students from all backgrounds can experience educational materials that reflect their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Additionally, MDE is working to address any biases of its own by requiring implicit bias training of all its employees.

Third, the Governor's Educator Advisory Council, nominated by Governor Gretchen Whitmer supported by MDE staff, has developed the following two resources.

The [Proclamation for Social Justice](#) is a document that serves as a timely reminder of our moral imperative. There should be no inequities among groups of children, least of all based on race. We see these as fault lines that will only exacerbate the problems of our society. We see these discrepancies in education as a call to conscience for us all. Classrooms are some of the most powerful places in the world, and this proclamation is a commitment to the children of our state that we will use our power for good.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

CASANDRA E. ULBRICH – PRESIDENT • PAMELA PUGH – VICE PRESIDENT
MICHELLE FECTEAU – SECRETARY • TOM MCMILLIN – TREASURER
TIFFANY D. TILLEY – NASBE DELEGATE • JUDITH PRITCHETT
LUPE RAMOS-MONTIGNY • NIKKI SNYDER

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • 833-633-5788

The [Social Justice & Anti-Racist Educator Resources](#) document is intended to fulfill the commitment to make anti-racism more accessible. Understanding that educators are busy, particularly in this time of overwhelming uncertainty and change, the Governor's Educator Advisory Council (GEAC) compiled these resources for all educators. Most importantly, this is a living document—one that the GEAC plans to update with educator input. While this moment is especially ripe for anti-racism education, we hope that these resources become a permanent part of every educator's pedagogy until the need for them becomes history.

MDE strongly encourages all educators to review these and other resources for opportunities to improve their practice as we work together as educators to fight racism and to create a society that is more equitable for all members.

If you have questions on the work of the GEAC, please contact Greg Talberg, GEAC chairperson, at TalbergG@michigan.gov.

If you have questions on MDE's efforts, please contact Dr. Paula Daniels, Director of the Office of Educational Supports, at DanielsP1@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors