

Cincinnati Educational Justice Coalition

Community Demands a Safe, Equitable, and Anti-Racist Re-Opening of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Marche' Gendrew, Coordinator for the Cincinnati Educational Justice Coalition (CEJC) Email: cincinnatieducationjustice@gmail.com or Phone: (513) 254-8259 Event Date: 12:00PM-1:00 PM Friday, June 19, 2020

Cincinnati, OH – Cincinnati is having a public reckoning with systemic racism and policing in our communities, and these issues directly affect the children and families who attend our City's public schools. The call for a "safe, equitable, and anti-racist re-opening" of schools also responds to the reality that the crises we are facing - COVID-19, an economic depression, and systemic racism - are all inter-connected.

The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and many others have laid even more bare the systemic racism that has always existed. The uprising for Black Lives has shown the kind of movement we need to transform society. The disproportionate, deadly impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and working-class communities has shown in sharp relief the lack of a social safety net. Amidst all of this, public education, one of the remaining hopes for racial justice, advancement, democracy, and community, is being targeted with budget cuts during a crisis of historic proportions. In this unprecedented moment, with public schools reopening post-COVID-19, we must demand transformed schools, and a transformed economy.

The community is invited to take part in a mass mobilization to demand a return to a better, not worse public education for our City's children. We are joining cities and towns across the nation to demand education justice. We will gather in front of the Board of Education to uplift and amplify the voices of those who are most impacted – students, parents, community, and teachers. The road to recovery runs directly through our public schools - we will only be as strong as the youth we educate. Various demands around education will be shared. A few examples:

√ It's time for us to adequately fund our public schools. The City of Cincinnati is considering their annual budget, and City leaders refuse to return millions of dollars meant for our children's classrooms, that are instead diverted to millionaires and corporate developers for their personal profits in the form of tax abatements and TIF's. And, Senator Portman must pass the federal "HEROES ACT" to shore up the millions in state cuts to public education and public health.

√ Students who are being evicted or are hungry can't learn - schools must not re-open and allow "business as usual" until the basic needs of our students, their families, and our workers are met. The lack of affordable housing, evictions and cuts to safety net services only cause further inequity.

√ The City of Cincinnati funds "SRO's" in our schools. How can we invest in trauma informed approaches, and restorative and culturally responsive practices to *proactively* create safety at schools? Schools must divest from police, security, surveillance, and other punitive approaches which make students of color less safe. We can divest from policing and invest in the things we need - equitable funding for social workers, nurses, counselors, etc.

√ Schools can include education to counter anti-Black racism in our communities with changes to curriculum, staff training on anti-racism, and recruiting more teachers who reflect the communities in which they teach.

Come and be a part of demanding a safe, anti-racist, and equitable re-opening of schools!

WHAT: Rally to Demand a Safe, Anti-Racist, Equitable Re-Opening of Schools

WHEN: Friday 12:00pm - 1:00pm June 19, 2020

WHERE: Board of Education 2651 Burnet Ave Cincinnati, OH 45219 (Front Entrance)

EVENT: This event will capture the personal experiences of those impacted by COVID-19 and systemic racism that riddles black communities. The event will include critical voices that are often not considered; CPS High School students, public school teachers, and community.