



Sun Prairie Area
School District
Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BLACK STUDENTS, STAFF, FAMILIES, AND
COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

WHEREAS, the Sun Prairie Area School District (SPASD) is the 13th largest school district in Wisconsin, serves 8,500 children and employs 1,350 staff members; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD educates students from early childhood through 12th grade, as well as students with disabilities in our 18-21 Transition Program, in 14 schools plus 10 community-based sites and five community school sites; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD is comprised of approximately 8,500 students, with approximately 1,500 of those students (18%) identifying as African-American; and

WHEREAS, Black lives matter protests have swept the nation as demonstrators demand justice in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and far too many other Black Americans to list; and

WHEREAS, the killing of Black men and women, including queer and trans persons of color, is an unacceptable violation of the human rights due to all people; and

WHEREAS, the current 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, unaffordable housing, income disparity, homophobia, 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, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court; and

WHEREAS, research has shown evidence of systematic bias in teacher expectations for African American students and non-Black teachers were found to have lower expectations of Black students than Black teachers; 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; Black children represent 19 percent of the nation's pre-school population, yet 47 percent of those receiving more than one out-of-school suspension; in comparison, White students represent 41 percent of pre-school enrollment but only 28 percent of those receiving more than one out-of-school suspension; and even more troubling, Black students 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, addressing the needs of African American learners requires recognition of the inherent value of Black students, families, and staff; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin continues to have the largest academic achievement gap in the nation between Black and Brown students and White students; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD has for decades had significant gaps; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD has often failed to fulfill its obligation to serve all students equally and to live up to its mission of Every Child, Every Day; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD has participated in maintaining a system of racial inequality through its actions and inactions, policies and practices, budgets, priorities, advocacy and silence, and by far too often privileging the prejudice of White parents over the well-being of Black students; and

WHEREAS, confronting our collective failure starts with an acknowledgement and apology for ways the SPASD has perpetuated a system of White privilege, failed to confront systematic racism, and remained silent far too many times in the presence of injustice; and

WHEREAS, The Board will continue to lead in the effort to address racism and its effects within our district and schools, through our budget, priorities, anti-racist policies, and by creating a culture that affirms that Black lives do indeed matter; and

WHEREAS, the SPASD has taken positive steps by developing an equity framework, forming a partnership with the Pacific Education Group, and developing extensive trainings for staff;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sun Prairie Area School District unequivocally believes that that Black lives matter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education vows to work to proactively identify class and cultural biases as well as practices, policies, and institutional barriers that negatively influence student learning, perpetuate achievement gaps, and impede equal access to opportunities for all students in order to eradicate institutional bias of any kind, including implicit or unintentional biases and prejudices that affect student achievement, and to eliminate disparities in educational outcomes for students from historically underserved and under-represented populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board commits itself not only to address the symbols of institutional racism and White privilege, but also to proactively identify and address biases, policies, and institutional barriers that perpetuate injustice and inequality in our schools and our community, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education recognizes the importance in disrupting a “business as usual” approach for African American students and their families, and using this opportunity to ensure our budget elevates the excellence for Black students and their families; and mandates continued training across the organization including for board members, administrators, teachers, and staff.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned resolution was duly adopted by unanimous vote of the Board of Education of the Sun Prairie Area School District on the 13th day of July, 2020.

Steve Schroeder, President

Tom Weber, Vice President

Caren Diedrich, Treasurer

Bryn Horton, Clerk

Dave Hoekstra, Governance Officer

Marilyn Ruffin, Deputy Clerk

Carol Sue Albright, Member

Quinn Williams, Student School Board Representative

Sarah Rhoads, Student School Board Representative