



Resolution

President Diane Barbosa, Vice President Jerry Jacobs
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WHEREAS, the Elizabeth Board of Education has strived to promote racial equity, inclusion and diversity in all aspects of our education system. This commitment is demonstrated in the Equity Policy passed by this Board in April 2019.

WHEREAS, racism is a root cause of poverty and constricted economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal; systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning values based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities. The Elizabeth Board of Education's collective success depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every child regardless of the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment and criminal justice. An emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, communities of color experience higher unemployment rates, face a higher poverty rate as a whole, have lower home ownership rates, are more likely to live in neighborhoods with low performing schools and experience disproportionately higher incarceration rates; and

WHEREAS, the Elizabeth Board of Education acknowledges that people of color have borne the burdens of inequitable social, environmental, economic, and criminal justice policies, practices and investments, to understand that the legacy of these inequitable policies has caused deep disparities, harm, and mistrust, and to recognize that racial equity is realized when and only when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes; and

WHEREAS, racism and segregation have also exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color having lower life expectancies; being far more likely than other races to die prematurely (before the age of 75); and to die of heart disease or stroke. Communities of color also have higher levels of infant mortality, lower birth weights, are more like to be overweight or obese, have adult diabetes, and have long-term complications from diabetes; and

WHEREAS, people of color, working class residents, and those that suffer from disabilities, are more likely to experience poor health outcomes because of health inequities stemming from economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and access to health care systems; and

WHEREAS, a contemporary example of such disparity is highlighted by COVID-19 data in the State of New Jersey that people of color are dying at a disproportionately higher rate from the disease; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization defines "public health" as the "the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized effort of society" and those "aim to provide conditions under which people can be healthy, improve their health and well-being, or prevent the deterioration of their health;" and

WHEREAS, the health impact of racism in New Jersey and Elizabeth rises to the definition of a public health crisis proposed by Dr. Sandro Galea who notes: "The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions".

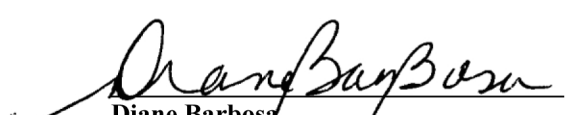
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ELIZABETH BOARD OF EDUCATION THAT THIS BOARD:

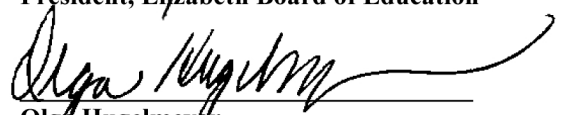
1. Asserts that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire country.
2. Will work with Administration to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles in leadership, staffing and contracting decisions.
3. Promotes educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development, and public safety.
4. Supports policies that improve health in communities of color and supports local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.
5. Will work with other organizations in Elizabeth that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
6. Supports community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live.
7. Promotes and supports policies that prioritize the health of all people especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences.
8. Encourages racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors, and contractors.
9. Will work to identify clear goals and objectives to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board of Education supports all additional efforts in Elizabeth, Union County, the State of New Jersey, and nationwide to address racism and public health disparities due to racial inequities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board calls upon all public and elected officials, and community organizations to join with us to declare racism as a public health crisis and to enact equity in all policies of the State of New Jersey

Elizabeth, New Jersey
September 17, 2020


Diane Barbosa
President, Elizabeth Board of Education


Olga Hugelmeyer
Superintendent of Schools