

RACE & EQUITY IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS: We know some of the most critical factors to effectively promote student success are quality teachers and staff, smaller class sizes, well-rounded curriculum, access to quality after-school programs, parental involvement, environments conducive to learning meaningful professional development and training, and adequate funding; and

WHEREAS: The cost of failing to ensure educational success are far-reaching, the unfavorable impact is reflected in future employment prospects, poverty and incarceration rates, as well as limited capacity to contribute in the world community; and

WHEREAS: Systemic racial disparities create an environment of unequal opportunities for educational success; and

WHEREAS: Policies, practices and stereotypes work against students of color to impinge on their opportunity for achieving educational success consequentially negatively impacting lifetime employment, financial and civic engagement opportunities; and

WHEREAS: New Detroit's Metropolitan Detroit Race Equity Report highlights that we are far from achieving racial equity in this region, and while we've made tremendous social and racial progress since May 17, 1954, Brown vs. Board of Education decision and even more since Milliken vs. Bradley 40 years ago, we still face continuing inequities, such as:

- Underfunded inner-city schools where more and more students every day are losing access to music, art, athletics, libraries, nurses, counselors, and other vital programs and staff;
- School districts are closings, like those in Buena Vista Township, Highland Park, Inkster, Muskegon Heights and Ypsilanti where school systems have been community hubs for many years. Such closures are occurring primarily in neighborhoods where low-income, African-American and Latino families reside;
- Student loan interest rates and public disinvestment in higher education are creating crippling debt for our young people and their families, and threatening access to college particularly in underrepresented groups;

WHEREAS: Recent policies of the Republican controlled state legislature and Governor Snyder, including funding disparities, Emergency Managers, and cuts to revenue sharing have exacerbated these racial inequalities; and

WHEREAS: The United States Supreme Court has upheld the ban on using affirmative action in higher education to address the effects of long-term discrimination; and

WHEREAS: We need to understand the consequences of these embedded racial inequities, how disparities are produced and how they can be eliminated to ensure that all students have the same opportunity for educational success; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will commit to ensuring that the topic of inequitable funding that disproportionately affects low income, African American, Latino, and other underrepresented groups, will be discussed at each Legislative Education Action Day (LEAD), formerly known as Lobby Day; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: AFT MI will encourage each local to commit to a day of action that addresses race, equity, and justice that will be led by their respective community engagement committees; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will commit to no less than two teach-ins per year on race.

Whereases Submitted by:

Human Rights Committee (May 12, 2014)