

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2023

**Resolution of the Francine Delany New School for Children Board of Education
Opposing NC House Bill 187**

FDNSC Resolves to Address Systemic Inequities on Individual, Community and Societal Levels

BE IT RESOLVED that Francine Delany New School for Children (FDNSC) is committed to eliminating inequity. We work for equitable outcomes for all students within an environment of learning that fosters joy, confidence, and competence. To achieve this, FDNSC is committed to enhancing cultural pedagogy, which includes curriculum and materials that represent our communities and that align with state standards. We are committed to annual equity audits and goals based on the findings. We are committed to equitable funding to ensure that resources are spent in ways that eliminate inequity. We are committed to addressing systemic inequities within society as a whole, the profession of education, and on an individual basis.

BE IT RESOLVED that more specifically, FDNSC is committed to adopting the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards with the already followed state standards. Working in conjunction with state standards, the Social Justice Standards focus on identity, diversity, justice and action, and help us ensure that every student has an experience that elevates their opportunity, validates their identity and engages their curiosity. These standards reflect FDNSC's commitment to a comprehensive, anti-racist and inclusive curriculum.

BE IT RESOLVED that FDNSC is committed to increasing diversity within our staff. Our Diversity Hiring Policy systematizes the hiring of candidates to prevent self-replication and to encourage candidates who bring cultures and lived experiences not already represented in our staff population. We understand the importance of representation in children's classrooms; we are continuing to build relationships with HBCU's and our community at large to build diversity within our teaching population.

BE IT RESOLVED that FDNSC is committed to funding professional development and family education opportunities that are anti-racist, and that include diversity, equity, social emotional learning, inclusion and cultural competency. Opportunities like Racial Equity Initiative training will be offered to all teachers as they are hired to provide a common understanding and language for ongoing work. Asheville organizations like Umoja Health, Wellness and Justice Collective continue to host events to address and heal from racism. Staff and families at FDNSC are committed to ongoing learning and growth to create more equitable outcomes for our community.

FDNSC recognizes that HB 187 attempts to restrict and prohibit honest conversations about race, conflicting with the existing state and local education standards and initiatives to expand equity, and infringing on the free speech rights of students, educators, and staff, although the bill states that it cannot violate freedom of speech rights.

HB 187 asserts that "the United States was not created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race"; however, FDNSC recognizes that many Constitutional Amendments and laws have been created to redress racist and sexist beliefs and policies in the original U.S. Constitution, restoring the rights of previously oppressed members of society based on their race or sex:

- The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, passed after the Civil War, gave rights to previously unfree people to ensure they were considered citizens under the law with equal protection, the right to vote and to live freely. These amendments were necessary because members of a particular race had, in fact, oppressed members of another group.
- The 20th Amendment passed in 1919 granted women the right to vote for the first time. This amendment was necessary because members of a particular sex had, in fact, oppressed members of another group based on their sex.
- The Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that “separate is not equal” under the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision because groups of students, based on their race, were receiving unequal educational opportunities.
- The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 to provide all people with equal access to public accommodations because Jim Crow segregation had, in fact, allowed the unequal treatment of one group based on their race.
- The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 to ensure that any eligible citizen was able to register and subsequently vote because one group, identified by race, was being systematically denied that right by members of another race.

BE IT RESOLVED that students at FDNSC learn about these and other accomplishments in U.S. history and the work that it took to achieve them. Learners at FDNSC receive a sound education, including accurate facts about all aspects of U.S. History, including systemic racism and discrimination, which is guaranteed for every North Carolina student in our state’s Constitution.

HB 187 asserts that public schools should not promote that “[a]ny individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress”; FDNSC agrees that history should never be used to create pain or to assign blame for things no one today had any power over.

BE IT RESOLVED that FDNSC is committed to providing opportunities for learning someone’s story, seeing life from another point of view, and we recognize that this may cause some discomfort. We are committed to working through this sense of discomfort, without shame, in order to grow and to contribute to a more just society.

HB 187 bans any teaching in which “[a]n individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex”; FDNSC agrees. No learner today bears responsibility or shame for historical events; however, we believe that it is our collective responsibility to address the legacies of historic, systemic and institutional racism still plaguing our nation’s children and families today, and we believe that we must begin with an honest recognition of the past. As Germany acknowledges the pervasive nature of the Holocaust and the legacy of white-supremacy, so too must the United States address and make amends for the legacy of slavery and white-supremacist ideas and actions that are visible today.

BE IT RESOLVED that because of the above commitments and critiques of HB 187, the FDNSC Board of Education urges members of the NC General Assembly to vote “NO” to HB 187.

The FDNSC Board of Education also urges members of the NC General Assembly to provide a robust public education budget with an equity toolkit that funds:

- Equity leadership that shares best practices statewide

- The adoption of comprehensive culturally responsive curricula for every school
- Increased representation of teachers of color (like an expansion of the NC Teaching Fellows Program)
- Reinstatement of masters pay to retain highly qualified professionals and recruit teachers of color who leave our state for better pay
- Teacher salaries at the national average pay in order to remain competitive in today's job market, and in order to ensure that education remains a lucrative prospect for our nation's best and brightest candidates

BE IT RESOLVED that further, FDNSC urges NC General Assembly members to fully fund education in our state, to hire and retain more highly qualified professionals, and to allow our schools to uphold the 2020 NC State Board of Education's "Resolution to Support Equity and Excellence in NC Public Education" as well as the 2019 adopted strategic plan which defined equity as an essential guiding principle.

Francine Delany New School for Children Board of Education

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