

EDUCATORS FOR BLACK LIVES



United Teachers of Richmond CTA/NEA

Memo from UTR to WCCUSD Board of Education - Demands in Solidarity with BLM

The United Teachers of Richmond CTA/NEA stands with WCCUSD, community organizations, youth, and CTA in condemning the racism, discrimination, and social injustice that has been occurring in our country for hundreds of years. **Black lives matter.**

As a union of over 1,600 educators, we have an obligation to act. We must grapple with the fact that our schools, our practices, policies, and even our own union, are shaped by inequities, bias, and institutional racism. We are grieving and we are outraged. Together, we must continue the call for justice and to hold powerful people, organizations, and each other accountable.

While it is important to name an issue, to share in our community's anger, and to call for change at large, it is equally important to identify actions within our areas of expertise and authority in which specific, positive improvement can be made. Earlier this week State Superintendent Tony Thurmond challenged us to think about how public education is both a cause and a potential solution to the problem of systemic racism in our society. UTR will take up that challenge and will seek to align our work with both our CTA colleagues and our allies in West Contra Costa. Please look below for the specific actions UTR is demanding WCCUSD takes during this time.

1. As the educators of WCCUSD and in support of the demands from youth and community, we demand that the West Contra Costa Board of Education enact the following:

- A. **WCCUSD must immediately defund School Resource Officers and invest in our Black students.** This action would save \$1.5 million dollars in the 2020-2021 school year which must be used to fund counselors specifically for our African American students and to fund the AASAT Resolution passed by the WCCUSD Board of Education in the Spring of 2020. WCCUSD must join a growing number of school districts across California that have eliminated, reduced, or are considering eliminating or reducing police presence in schools. These include Los Angeles, Oakland, Coachella Valley, Pomona, Sacramento, and Piedmont.
- B. **WCCUSD must provide training for educators this summer around restorative justice practices and anti-racism.** This can be done on the first day of PD we have in August and revisited with the 12 hours of Self Directed PD throughout the year and must be required for both classroom educators, site administrators, and support staff who directly help students.
- C. **WCCUSD must provide space for Black educators to share input, concerns, and needs.** WCCUSD must directly respond by providing support. Such spaces could be done through affinity groups hosted by WCCUSD and UTR.
- D. **WCCUSD must create “Race and Equity” teams at every school.** These teams will look at academics, disciplinary and attendance data, qualitative data, family feedback, and school policies in order to make immediate changes to

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create anti-racist schools. Some of the recommendations may be professional development, eliminating racist school policies, interventions for students, further support for educators, or more.

- E. **WCCUSD must create a plan to increase access to ethnic studies courses.** It's critical that through our teaching students are able to learn about their history and our African American students rarely get to take courses that show their own history while counting towards graduation. We would like to see a way to increase these courses at every high school in WCCUSD and make sure students have the opportunity to count these courses towards graduation.

2. As a union UTR is committing to the following:

- A. UTR will use our own resources to continue to develop professional development opportunities around anti-racism and restorative justice practices for all our members including reaching out to CTA, NEA, and our community partners for tools.
- B. UTR will provide space for Black educators to meet and discuss the challenges and issues they see in WCCUSD and how we can advocate for those issues.
- C. UTR will continue to support all actions by students, families, and community partners who are advocating for change in WCCUSD and broader communities around Black Lives Matter.
- D. UTR will participate in a District-wide book club both in the Fall and Spring to discuss Anti-racism in education.
- E. UTR will reaffirm our commitment to the Black Lives Matter Movement and the resolution in support of the campaign passed by the UTR Representative Council in 2018. UTR will commit \$10,000 towards the implementation of supports, tools, and the above-mentioned commitments for the 2020-2021 school year.

UTR stands with the thousands of students, families, educators, and leaders in support of Black Lives Matter advocating for the end of police brutality across the United States, in California, and in all of our cities within WCCUSD. We stand with our students in advocating for the demands of WCCUSD above and hope our Superintendent, staff, and Board of Education will stand with our youth as well and put these issues up for discussion at the next Board of Education meeting.

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