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Indianapolis Public Schools Approves Historic Racial Equity Policy

(June 25, 2020) — The Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) Board of School Commissioners approved an historic policy to address the district’s ongoing efforts to curtail racism and biases, and their negative effects on students, parents and staff.

During Thursday’s Board Action Session, the Board approved the **Racial Equity Mindset, Commitment & Action** policy. It sets up an extensive framework that clearly shows where IPS stands on issues of race, how it is working to become an anti-racist organization while setting racial equity as the foundation for serving all students well.

“I am proud of this moment, but we must remember this is just the start,” said Michael O’Connor, Board president. “All we have done is put words on paper – good, powerful and meaningful words. But, if we don’t follow that up with action, that meaning will all be lost. We must have uncomfortable conversations, make difficult decisions and demand the equity we are spelling out.”

Superintendent Aleesia Johnson named racial equity one of the district’s top strategic priorities a year ago. This policy is a crucial next step promoting learning and work environments that respect and value diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

“The commitment of the Board and district leadership to further refine our ability to level the playing field for all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, is profound,” said Aleesia Johnson, IPS superintendent. “All of our 31,000 students deserve the best instructors, classroom environments, curriculum and technology to reach their full potential now and in the future.”

The policy will implement several actions, including:

- Creating an infrastructure for all IPS staff members to have access to robust professional learning experiences around racial equity.
- Activating and responding accordingly to support the district’s most vulnerable communities, especially in the event of an unprecedented crisis (e.g., a global pandemic).
- Expanding ongoing efforts to identify and address racial disparities and disproportionalities in school suspensions, expulsions and academic outcomes.
- Intentionally ensuring all students have access to high-quality, culturally relevant curriculums and instructional materials.

The Board and district leadership both agree the deliberate actions to keep Black and Brown students and their families at a disadvantage for decades still reverberate in today’s communities of color.

“As one who has slowly been watching this move since the early 1970s, it is such an honor to be able to present this to the Board and watch this historic policy finally come to fruition,” said Dr. Patricia Payne, director of the IPS Racial Equity Office and a 58-year employee of the district.

In addition to the racial equity policy, the board also approved the **Black Lives Matter** resolution. The resolution underscores the policy's intentional efforts to support legislation, advocacy and the culture of diversity throughout the district, stating:

- Black lives matter – Every student is capable of success, deserving of respect and valuable to our community.
- All students – of every race – benefit from Black teachers and Black leaders.
- Representation and recognition matters.
- Understanding the ugly truth of our past is necessary to building a beautiful vision of our future.

To read the full **Racial Equity Mindset, Commitment & Action** policy, click [HERE](#).

To read the full **Black Lives Matter** resolution, click [HERE](#).

For more information, contact Carrie Black, IPS communications manager, at 317-605-3797.

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