

BSU Black Lives Matter in Schools 4-Point Program

We want real and measurable change. Since the district was established in 1953, has the data from assessments, school discipline, and graduation rates significantly closed gaps between White students and BIPOC/marginalized students? If so, when? If not, why? Has the NTPS school board intentionally sought representation from minoritized groups? If so, when? If not, why? Has there been Black representation on the school board at any time? If so, when? If not, why? Please provide this information to the RRHS BSU for review prior to the July 14th meeting.

We want Juneteenth to be on the district's calendar for June 19th just like the district has Black Lives Matter in Schools on the calendar in February. However, this act, like all the district's claims of commitment to equity, must be evidenced with actions and data driven results.

Description

Part of our district's equity work in NTPS. Check with your principal to find out if there are Black Lives Matter lessons going on at your school! This is part of a national initiative supported by the NEA.

<https://neaedjustice.org/black-lives-matter-at-school/>

Words on the district's strategic plan and calendar are not enough, especially if those words are feeble and unconvincing, "Check...to **find out if** there are...BLM lessons..." Equity work that allows principals and educators to opt out is not equity work; it is insincere pageantry that led to 67 years of failure to improve educational outcomes for Black and Brown students. The following actions are what need to be taken now to make Black Lives Matter in Schools!

1. **We want North Thurston Public Schools to mandate Black History and Ethnic Studies education at all levels and in all content areas.**
 - a. Decolonize curriculum
 - i. Provide a framework that can be applied in all content areas at every grade level
 1. Compensate anti-racist educators, parents/caregivers from marginalized groups, community members, and students to create and train others in applying an Ethnic Studies framework.
 2. Create paid multicultural mentor/consultant positions that will coach and guide any NTPS employee who is identified with

- having a need and/or interest in becoming more culturally responsive.
- 3. Access the cultural wealth of parents and families of marginalized students
 - a. Compensate them for their expertise
 - b. Their skills and knowledge are invaluable and must be treated as such
- b. We want to be taught our history from multiple perspectives and not just Eurocentric perspectives.
 - i. There is not a single content area absent of BIPOC achievements and contributions , yet they have been and continue to be willfully excluded from the curriculum.
 - 1. This practice engenders White supremacist ideologies while reinforcing BIPOC subordination.
 - ii. Cultural festivals, celebrations, and all activities that relegate cultural learning to a surface level must have substantive components that do not perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce White supremacy.
 - 1. The district must employ a cultural review board of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ representatives immediately.
 - iii. Replacing Eurocentric perspectives with a multicultural lens in education can cultivate positive and healthy identity development in all students.

We want this content to be taught but it is also important how it is taught.

2. We want North Thurston Public Schools to hire and retain more Black teachers and educators that have:

- a. A strong commitment to anti-racism and equity
 - i. Interview questions must challenge applicants to address race and racism and other forms of oppression in NTPS and be committed to empowering the oppressed to create change.
 - 1. What are the current practices that “eliminate bias” in the interview process?
 - ii. Hiring panels must have anti-bias training and an understanding of current research and literature on racial equity in schooling.
- b. An Ethnic Studies approach in their curriculum or a desire to transform their curricular framework to do so.

- c. We want North Thurston Public Schools to mandate professional development focused on
 - i. anti-racism and equity training for ALL employees and volunteers.
 - ii. White teachers must open their hearts and minds to become better teachers to their non-White students.
 - 1. Certificated and non-certificated staff should be regularly assessed by students and caregivers on their performance.
 - 2. Any NTPS employee who does not show growth and who does not meet standards on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion must be held accountable.
 - a. Enter into a multicultural mentoring program
 - b. Receive additional professional development
 - c. Be demoted
 - d. Be relieved of their position
 - iii. NTPS must establish compensated positions for a student committee focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - 1. These must be representatives with strongly anti-racist commitments and experiences.
3. **We want North Thurston Public Schools to end zero-tolerance discipline.**
- a. Invest in training students, staff, and families in restorative justice and peer mediation.
 - b. Build relationships between all stakeholders
4. **We want North Thurston Public Schools to fund more counselors and services, not cops.**
- a. Law enforcement officers are already being asked to do too much.
 - i. Any officer deployed to school sites must have equity and anti-racist training.
 - b. We need to ensure that there are professionals in the areas of mental health, child-welfare, substance abuse, homelessness, etc. connected with the schools to address these issues with families and students.
 - c. School communities need to manage school discipline with every measure taken to de-escalate, use restorative practices, and cultivate a positive school climate and culture.

The Black Student Union intends to present these action items to the North Thurston Public Schools School Board meeting on Tuesday, July 14th. Public comments will be accepted until 12pm on that date. Please support us by emailing: superintendent@nthurston.k12.wa.us

To Superintendent Clemens,

The River Ridge High School Black Student Union (RRHS BSU) is proposing a 4-Point Program that addresses the needs of Black students that will work to ensure better educational outcomes for them in the North Thurston Public Schools K-12 system. Some of these action items are included in the language of the District's strategic plan. Some of the actions are being pursued within the District but are not made transparent to students, caregivers, nor the community.

The RRHS BSU is consistently asked to make their activities transparent to their advisors and school administration so that they can work together in planning successful activities and events. They believe that their voices need to be heard at the District level. They believe this will ensure that the planning done around equity work, curriculum design, policies, and practices will effectively begin to dismantle the systemic racism at NTPS that has perpetuated disproportionate outcomes that have harmed Black students since the district's establishment in 1953.

We believe that they must have a seat at the table in order to make real and measurable changes to support Black students. We cannot turn a blind eye to the oppression of Black people anymore. We believe that you must start by seeing and listening to the struggles of our Black students and families. You must commit to working with them to problem-solve the educational inequities they have endured for nearly seven decades within the walls of North Thurston Public Schools. Put them on the agenda.

Regards,

RRHS BSU Ally