



# **A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES:**

## **POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE**

### **An End to the Privatization of Education and Real Community Control by Parents, Students and Community Members of Schools Including Democratic School Boards and Community Control of Curriculum, Hiring, Firing, and Discipline Policies**

#### **What is the problem**

- Sixty years since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the school-to-prison pipeline continues to play in role in denying Black people their human right to an education and privatization strips Black people of the right to self-determine the kind of education their children receive. This systematic attack is coordinated by an international education privatization agenda, bankrolled by billionaire philanthropists such as Bill and Melinda Gates, the Walton Family, and Eli and Edythe Broad, and aided by the departments of Education at the federal, state, and local level. Inequitable funding at the school district, local and state level leave most public schools — where poor communities of color are the majority — unable to provide adequate and high quality education for all students, criminalizing and targeting Black students through racist zero-tolerance discipline policies. The cutting of key staff such as teachers, counselors and nurses, and the inability to provide learning resources such as textbooks and science equipment, leave Black school districts unable to ensure their students graduate on time, college and career ready, and leave them vulnerable for privatization and education profiteers. Using mayoral control and state takeover, they impose their experimental, market-based approach to school reform. Key stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and students are left out of the decision making process. Their concerns and needs are ignored by those appointed to run the school districts — individuals who are more accountable to the institutional leaders who have appointed them than t to the communities they are tasked to serve. This leaves room for corporations, lobbyists, and big philanthropy to play influential roles on education policy at the local, state, and federal level where their money can buy access into a cash-strapped system. Their aims are to undermine Black democracy and self-determination, destroy organized labor, and decolor education curriculum, while they simultaneously overemphasize Standardized Testing, and use school closures to disproportionately disrupt access to education in Black communities.

#### **What does this solution do?**

- Build an international movement of people of African descent to force nations to ratify and recognize education as human right, and end privatization.
- Guarantee public education is protected by federal government
- End state takeovers and mayoral control of public education while building new democratic structures, such as people's assemblies, that prepare parents to govern again.



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- All states should have Full Funding Formulas that adequately weigh the needs of all districts in the state.
- Federal funds can only go to districts that have elected school boards.
- Place a moratorium on charter schools and school closures.
- Increase federal funding for schools, forcing federal government to help out states and pay for a bigger chunk than they currently do.
- Repeal the “convert-charter-close” model and offer what was the fifth option at the time, community led transformation, which was articulated as sustainable school transformation; it calls for a community-based model of school transformation.
- End corporate backed market reformer programs such as Teach For America and the Broad Superintendents Academy.
- Eliminate the privately backed lobby from all levels of the federal Department of Education.
- Put a moratorium on all out-of-school suspensions.
- Shut down all juvenile detention centers.
- Remove police from schools and replace them with positive alternatives to discipline and safety.

### **Federal Action:**

- Eliminate the privately-backed lobby from all levels of the federal Department of Education.
- Put a moratorium on school closures.
- Put a moratorium on all out of school suspensions.
- Increase federal spending on education with no requirements of closures and charterization.
- End Race to the Top funding.

### **State Action:**

- It will be difficult to say until we understand the impact of new Every Student Achieves legislation on our education system.
- Full Funding Formulas that adequately weigh the needs of all districts in all states.
- Put a moratorium on school closures.
- Put a moratorium on all out-of-school suspensions.
- Shut down all juvenile detention centers.
- Remove police from schools and replace them with positive alternatives to discipline and safety.
- Return Local Control of schools back to their districts through the creation of elected school boards.
- Debt of elimination of Black municipalities.



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### **Local Action:**

- It will be difficult to say until we understand the impact of new Every Student Achieves legislation on our education system.
- Create Community Schools that have wrap-around services for students and community members as a turnaround model instead of closing schools or charterization.
- Create and implement elected school boards.

### **How does this solution address the specific needs of some of the most marginalized Black people?**

- The education crises plaguing most of our public school districts are the result of corporate-controlled, state-sanctioned and federally-funded attacks to reverse *Brown v. Board of Education*, and create a desuetude discrimination and educational apartheid that must be challenged and overthrown. State governments are abdicating their civic responsibility of preparing all Black children for full and first class citizenship. First, by criminalizing Black students through the school-to-prison pipeline, then stripping their parents of the democratic control of their schools. Finally, we must stop closing their schools and selling them to corporate school reformers to be made into test subjects of experimental, market-based education reforms. Budget cuts, standardized tests, and rabid charter expansion places Black students in buildings that are falling apart, creates unhealthy learning environments (physically and emotionally), and robs them of the futures —graduating unprepared for college, career or community. These same students, instead, are subject to increased police violence, disproportionate suspensions and expulsions, and are likely to be pushed out of school all together. Generations of Black students are sent out into the world, unprepared for the realities of a shrinking job market, increasing gentrification of the neighborhoods, and the high costs of higher education.

### **Resources:**

- [Every Student Succeeds Act Explained](#)
- [AROS Demands Memo](#)
- [Journey For Justice](#)

### **Organizations Currently Working on Policy:**

- Alliance for Educational Justice
- Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools
- Journey for Justice

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