



June 22, 2020

Kokomo School Corporation's mission is “to develop globally minded and compassionate lifelong learners for a changing world.”

As a public school district, we believe education, when conducted through an anti-racist lens, is an effective tool in helping students feel valued as unique individuals, while effectively serving historically underserved students. We want our students to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that **their lives matter – Black Lives Matter**.

Kokomo School Corporation staff is committed to supporting and protecting Black students. As we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, Kokomo School Corporation staff will have important conversations about racism, as well as identify actions we can take to acknowledge and address injustices and anti-Black bias.

Kokomo School Corporation officials will center our equity work in the upcoming year by expanding our efforts related to the following tasks:

- 1. Educating ourselves about race, anti-Black racism, and white privilege.** Self-introspection is an important starting point in better understanding American racism. Kokomo School Corporation employees and students who learn about oppression can engage in the process of self-reflection through education: important first steps for individuals. A sample list of suggested reading is attached to this statement.
- 2. Learning, designing, and teaching an anti-bias curriculum.** Kokomo School Corporation leaders must conduct extensive reviews of what is taught, and how it is taught, in an effort to address Black bias in K-12 curricula and classes. We must utilize existing processes, such as textbook adoptions, to examine our teaching practices and the texts we use to build a curriculum that is culturally inclusive and anti-racist.
- 3. Examining policies and practices at the district and school levels.** Kokomo School Corporation leaders must strive to remove structural racism and develop anti-bias practices by understanding norms and procedures that reinforce or perpetuate racial group inequity and implicit bias. We must research, identify, and address situations where Black students disproportionately are harmed through existing practices, and strive for restorative justice. Further, Kokomo School Corporation officials must expand efforts to promote equity and diversity in classrooms and schools by hiring and retaining a diverse staff. Indiana’s elected leaders must address the statewide systemic shortages of licensed Black educators in our State’s education system.

4. **Demanding increased funding for at-risk students.** Since 1993, the State of Indiana has implemented a “complexity index” (originally “at-risk index”) in an attempt to more equitably fund students and school districts. A positive relationship exists between funding and student performance, AND it costs more to educate at-risk students. Since 2014, Indiana’s elected leaders have reduced “complexity” funding for at-risk students by approximately 10%, while increasing “equal” funding on a per-student basis. Amongst other things, this action has reduced funding for urban education and redirected funds to suburban school districts, which historically are less diverse. Aristotle once said, “The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.” The structural racism resulting from these recent changes in school funding priorities creates inherent disadvantages for students of color, specifically Black students.

5. **Fighting to stop Indiana’s expansion and misutilization of “choice scholarships” or vouchers.** Indiana’s elected leaders also have expanded voucher eligibility by creating new pathways for receiving State funds to attend private schools. In doing so, the percent of Black students receiving vouchers as a percent of all students receiving vouchers continues to decline on an annual basis. The overall effect of vouchers is an increasingly segregated system of schools, with increased costs for vouchers that take much-needed funds from public schools which accept and educate all students. Indiana’s elected leaders must stop the institutional racism that exists under the guise of school choice. Legislators must research, and consider, the discriminatory effects of vouchers.

Kokomo School Corporation must demonstrably show that **Black Lives Matter**. We must strive to create educational environments and opportunities that reflect the students we serve as we strive to ensure that our students have fair access to excellent and inclusive learning opportunities. **We stand in solidarity with the communities we serve as we work to build a more just and equitable world.**