

National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

Action Kit

October 30, 2001

**Coordinated by the
ERASE (Expose Racism and Advance School Excellence) Initiative,
a national project of the Applied Research Center**
(revised 7/9/01)

Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| • Save the Date | 3 |
| • Overview | 4 |
| • Major Themes | 5-7 |
| • Participation Agreement | 8 |
| • Researching Racism | 9 |
| • Public Information Request Letter to Local School District | 10 |
| • Public Information Request Letter to State Department of Education | 11 |
| • Community Opinion Survey | 12 |
| • Local Racial Equity Report | 13-15 |
| • National Report | 16 |
| • Action Ideas | 17 |
| • Media Messages | 18 |
| • Timeline | 19 |
| • ERASE Partners | 20-23 |
| • SMART Schools Proposal | Appendix |
| • Addresses of State Departments of Education | Appendix |

Save the Date

**National Day of Action for Racial Justice in
Schools**

Tuesday, October 30, 2001

**Join dozens of community groups across the country in local
actions to demand racial justice in our schools.**

For more information, contact:
Tammy Johnson or Jennifer Emiko Boyden
ERASE Initiative
Applied Research Center
3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611.
Phone: 510-653-3415, Fax: 510-653-3427
Website: www.arc.org, E-mail: [ERASE @ arc.org](mailto:ERASE@arc.org)

Overview of the National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

WHAT is it?

It's a designated day for organizations around the country to focus public attention on racial inequality in our public education system and to call for equitable school reforms. By holding coordinated public actions in communities across the country, we can amplify and echo the message that our public policies and spending on schools must reflect a high priority on racial equity. *This event will bring particular attention to racial profiling and punishment in our schools – the hazards of learning while Black or Brown.*

WHY are we doing this?

The major school policy trends and current spending priorities are failing to address the widespread racial inequalities in our schools and are, in fact, exacerbating institutional racism. *High-stakes testing and maximum-security school environments are both essentially punitive measures that amount to sophisticated forms of racial profiling and punishment of students of color.* These punitive policies also detract attention and resources from positive reforms that have proven results in improving educational excellence and equity – such as expanding the pool of high-quality teachers so that there's a top-notch teacher in every class, and reducing the size of schools and classes.

WHEN is it?

Tuesday, October 30, 2001.

WHO will participate?

Community-based organizations from around the country and their allies will participate. The event is being coordinated by the Applied Research Center in collaboration with the ERASE Partners, a national network of community organizations working to address racial justice in schools.

WHERE will it be held?

There will be activities in local communities across the country, wherever community organizations want to raise issues of racial inequities and racial justice in schools.

HOW do I get involved?

Information and action kits are available with lots of suggestions for how you can participate. Contact:

Tammy Johnson or Jennifer Emiko Boyden
ERASE Initiative
Applied Research Center
3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611.
Phone: 510-653-3415, Fax: 510-653-3427
Website: www.arc.org, E-mail: ERASE @ arc.org

Major Themes for the National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

Theme: Learning While Black or Brown: Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools.

Racist Policies: Two new policy trends in public education have discriminatory impacts on people of color.

1. High-stakes testing: There has been a major expansion in the use of standardized testing along with associated high-stakes sanctions, including grade retention, diploma denials and financial penalties. The vastly unequal educational experiences and opportunities afforded to students of different racial and economic backgrounds are reflected in standardized test scores. Students of color and low-income students are more likely to have less experienced teachers, less access to advanced courses, and more crowded classrooms than their white counterparts. These tests, at best, measure the unequal opportunities of the test-takers. It's no wonder students of color generally score lower on standardized tests than white students.

Based on their test results, individual students of color are disproportionately sanctioned and blamed for the systemic inequities and failures of our schools. Thousands of students of color who have completed all requirements for graduation are now denied high school diplomas as a result of exit exams. Students most likely to score the lowest are being held back or pushed out so as not to bring down the school's scores. Though neutral and even scientific in appearance, standardized tests have become the new pseudoscience to justify racial tracking and discrimination. Like the poll tests of yesteryear, the cleverly sophisticated instruments used to keep people of color from voting, today's high-stakes test scores are so racially skewed that there could hardly be a more effective instrument to deny learning and life opportunities to people of color.

2. Maximum-Security Schools: There has been a major expansion in school security and disciplinary measures, including zero tolerance policies, police in schools, sophisticated surveillance equipment, increased suspensions and expulsions, school "lock-downs," and a more militarized school climate. Students of color are far more likely than white students to be subjected to controlling surveillance measures and punitive disciplinary actions. Schools, especially those with a majority of students of color, have taken on an increasingly militarized, prison-like climate – one that is hardly conducive to learning.

The racial profiling that's prevalent in our criminal justice system is also a significant dynamic in our schools. The vast majority of "offenses" in schools are non-violent and subjective (such as "acting out" or "defiance of authority"), rather than violent or objective (such as weapons or drugs). With the presence of more police in schools, mandatory punishments, and the expansion of exclusionary penalties (suspensions and expulsions), more students of color are getting pushed out or thrown out of school. Students are increasingly leaving school with police records instead of diplomas, and our maximum-security schools are becoming pipelines to prison.

Critical Flaws in Public Education Policy: Current educational policies have several critical flaws:

- 1. Ignoring Racism and Unequal Impacts:** Major educational policies often ignore the fact that students of different races have vastly differing experiences in our school system. Fair treatment, full access, and equal opportunity are still elusive concepts for many students of color. Policies that fail to acknowledge or address institutional racism end up reinforcing and exacerbating racism. Also, when racism is only measured by intent, rather than impacts, policies such as standardized testing and zero tolerance, which result in vast racial disparities, are seen as race-neutral rather than institutionally racist.
- 2. Blaming Individuals for Systemic Inequalities:** Unequal inputs produce unequal outcomes. Many policies, such as those fueling the proliferation of standardized tests, assume that all people are on a level playing field. Thus, low test scores are attributed to individual deficiencies, rather than systemic inequalities and failures. The blame gets squarely placed on individuals, especially people of color. Similarly, it is assumed that students who are suspended the most, especially students of color, are, in fact, “the problem.” Teachers and administrators who interpret student behaviors and assign punishments are assumed to be free of subjectivity and bias. And the defining conditions of the learning environment—inadequate teachers, boring curricula and a hostile and militarized school environment—are rarely seen as reasons that students act out, check out or drop out.
- 3. Diverting attention and resources away from real solutions:** Sadly, high-stakes testing and excessive school security are big-ticket items in terms of expenditures. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on excessive testing and security. These expenditures directly compete with the kinds of programs and policies that would improve academic performance and school safety for all students.

Policy Proposals: Plenty of school reforms can produce both academic quality and equity, including:

- 1. High-quality teaching:** Providing a top-notch teacher in every class should be at the top of our national priorities. Teachers who lack credentials or experience are teaching millions of schoolchildren, especially those in inner-city schools. Our highest-need students often have the most underqualified teachers. Students of color are hurt most by the shortfalls in the quality, quantity and diversity of our teaching force. Every student in every class deserves a top-notch teacher who has the skills to teach in today’s racially, culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse classrooms.
- 2. Smaller schools and class sizes.** Ample funding for new and expanded staff and facilities must be committed and targeted to the highest-need schools. Schools in greatest need of classsize reduction are those with the least funding to hire more staff and the least space to hold more classes. The quality of teaching and learning is significantly affected by the size of our classes and schools. By reducing class size, teachers are more able to tailor their curriculum to the needs and abilities of each student. Disciplinary problems are also reduced in small classes and schools because there is more opportunity for each student to be personally known, better understood, respected and intellectually engaged by the school’s staff.

Conclusion: It's easier to blame individuals than to change the system. But if we are to confront the fundamental problem in our schools today, we must be willing to acknowledge and eliminate the widespread institutionalized racial inequality.

The inputs to our schools directly determine the outcomes. If we provide high-quality teachers, small classes, ample instructional facilities and materials, and a climate conducive to learning, we'll see dramatic positive results. If the major inputs are more testing and more security, the outcomes, in terms of academic performance and racial inequality, will only worsen. Students need supports, not sanctions.

Learning while Black or Brown in the U.S. has become a crime. But the real crime is the perpetuation of racially discriminatory policies and funding priorities when solutions proven to be effective are readily available.

Participation Agreement: National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

() **YES, We want to participate in this national effort to demand racial justice in our schools.**

Here's what you and your local group can do (check which things you are willing to do):

1. Collect Information

- _____ A. Address and send in the two attached public information requests, one to your local schools and one to your state Department of Education. Be sure to keep a copy of each of them for yourself.
- _____ B. Insist that these agencies provide you all the information you requested, and complain/protest if they refuse to release the information.

2. Write a report about the information you collect

- _____ A. Complete the enclosed 3-page Report Form about your schools.
- _____ B. Include in your report some short quotes from people in your community.

3. Conduct an opinion survey of people in your community

- _____ A. Use the enclosed form to survey local people. (Set a goal for how many surveys to collect and whom you will survey -- for example, you could survey 50 students and 50 parents for a total of 100. Try to get a good racial mix of the survey respondents.)
- _____ B. Compile the survey results to see what the prevailing local opinions are on important school matters.
- _____ C. Use the opportunity of collecting the survey to recruit people to join your organizing activities.

4. Share your findings with the Applied Research Center's ERASE Initiative

- _____ A. Send your findings to ARC by **September 7, 2001** so that they can be included in a national report.

5. Publicly announce your findings on the National Day of Action for Racial Justice

- _____ A. Create a news release about your local findings to send to your local media.
- _____ B. Hold a press conference or a public action to bring attention to racial equity issues.
- _____ C. Meet with members of your school board and/or make a presentation to your school board.
- _____ D. Write an op-ed and letters to the editor of local newspapers.
- _____ E. Send letters to public officials such as your state legislators, Governor, U.S. Congresspersons, etc.

Your Contact Information:

Name: _____ Organization: _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Send this form to ERASE, Applied Research Center, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611. Fax: 510-653-3427.

Researching Racism for the National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

Here's what's involved in doing some research to uncover racial disparities:

1. Send a public information request to your local school district and your state Department of Education (Address and mail the attached sample letters, then follow up so you get the information.)
2. Conduct a community opinion survey (use copies of the attached survey form for each interview)
3. Gather some quotes, anecdotes, stories and, if possible, photos to illustrate the findings of your research.
4. Compile your findings into a short report (use the attached 3-page Local School Equity Report form)

Once you have this research, you then have ammunition to make your case about racial inequalities in your schools. Keep in mind the theme: Learning While Black or Brown: Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools. See what statistics from your research can illustrate this theme.

Here are some examples of what you might find:

Your school district or state is spending millions on school security. Yet more and more students are being suspended and expelled, especially students of color. The increased security and discipline measures are not preventing discipline problems, they're just punishing more people, who happen to be mostly Black and Brown. Excessive security measures amount to a racist policy.

Your school district or state is spending millions on standardized testing. An overwhelming number of those failing the tests are students of color. Yet, there's also a huge teaching shortage. And an overwhelming number of the inexperienced and emergency-permitted teachers are teaching in the schools with the highest concentrations of people of color. If this is the case, wouldn't it be better to spend the millions on teaching instead of testing?

Your local opinion surveys reveal that students and parents in your community are united in their belief that we're spending too much on testing and security, and not enough on teaching and class size reduction. If this is the case, why are our policymakers promoting the proliferation of punitive measures? Who are they listening to?

Then you're ready to go public by exposing racial inequality and demanding equitable solutions.

Dear School District Public Information Officer:

I would like to obtain the following information:

1. The total amount of expenditures by the district for school security during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available) and projected expenditures for 2001-2002. Please include expenditures for school safety programs, personnel (security guards, police, and other safety officers), equipment (such as surveillance cameras, metal detectors, security fences), and any other related expenses.
2. The total number of suspensions and expulsions during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available). Please provide these figures disaggregated by race.
3. The total amount of expenditures by the district for standardized testing during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available), and projected expenditures for 2001-2002. Please include expenditures for test preparation programs, training of personnel to administer tests, testing materials, and any other related expenses.
4. A list of the standardized tests administered at each grade level and a list of how many students failed these tests at each grade level, with these figures disaggregated by race, for the most recent year these figures are available.
5. Data for the two most recent years available on the number of teaching positions that are filled by: (A) teachers who lack a full teaching credential for the subject area they teach, (B) teachers who are teaching with an emergency permit or waiver of requirements, (C) teachers who are teaching outside of their credentialed subject area, and (D) long-term substitutes filling vacant teaching positions, and (E) any documents related to new initiatives or expenditures by the district to increase the quality, quantity, and/or diversity of the teaching force.
6. Information, for the two most recent years available, on class sizes, including: (A) the established state or local maximum class size at each grade level; (B) the average class size at each grade level; (C) the number and percent of classes that exceeded the maximum class size level; (D) the number and percent of schools that exceed the school size limits, if any; and (E) any documents related to expenditures for new initiatives or school construction by the local school district to reduce class or school sizes, or to expand available classroom space.

This information will be used solely for the public interest and not for profit. Therefore, I would like to request that any copying or compilation charges be waived. Also, please let me know, in writing, if any of this information is not collected or cannot be made available. In accordance with public record laws, I trust that you will provide this information to me in a timely manner. Thank you very much for your assistance. Feel free to contact me, if needed.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Dear State Department of Education Public Information Officer:

I would like to obtain the following information:

1. The total amount of expenditures by the state for school security during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available), and projected expenditures for 2001-2002. Please include expenditures for school safety programs, personnel, equipment, and any other related expenses.
2. The statewide total number of suspensions and expulsions during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available). Please provide these figures disaggregated by race.
3. The total amount of expenditures by the state for the administration of standardized tests during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years (or most recent two years of data available), and projected expenditures for 2001-2002. Please include expenditures for test preparation programs, training of personnel to administer tests, testing materials, and any other related expenses.
4. A list of the standardized tests administered at each grade level and a list of how many students failed these tests at each grade level, with these figures disaggregated by race, for the most recent year these figures are available.
5. Data for the two most recent years available on the number of teaching positions, statewide, filled by: (A) teachers who lack a full teaching credential for the subject areas they teach, (B) teachers who are teaching with an emergency permit or waiver of requirements, (C) teachers who are teaching outside of their credentialed subject area, (D) long-term substitutes filling vacant teaching positions; and (E) any documents related to new initiatives or expenditures by the Dept. of Education to increase the quality, quantity, and/or diversity of the local teaching force.
6. Statewide information for the two most recent years available on class sizes, including: (A) the state's maximum class size at each grade level; (B) the average class size at each grade level; (C) the number and percent of classes that exceed the state's maximum class size level; (D) the number and percent of schools that exceeded the school size limits, if any; and (E) any documents related to expenditures on new initiatives or school construction by the state to reduce class or school sizes, or to expand available classroom space.

This information will be used solely for the public interest and not for profit. Therefore, I would like to request that any copying or compilation charges be waived. Also, please let me know, in writing, if any of this information is not collected or cannot be made available. In accordance with public record laws, I trust that you will provide this information to me in a timely manner. Thank you very much for your assistance. Feel free to contact me, if needed.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Community Opinion Survey

Date: _____ **School District:** _____ **City/State:** _____

Respondent's Background: Check which ones apply to you:

Role: parent of school-aged children student teacher school administrator
 Race: African American Latino/a Asian American Native American White Mixed race
 Is the local school where you (or your child) attend: majority white students or majority students of color

1. Spending Priorities: For each item below, do you think your schools should spend more, less, or the same as now?

| | More | Less | Same | | More | Less | Same |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • standardized testing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • school security | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • improved teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • smaller class sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • teacher salaries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | • new school facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Standardized Tests: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. Standardized tests are a good measure of intelligence and ability | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| B. Standardized tests help improve our schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| C. Time spent preparing for, and taking, standardized tests is a good use of time | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| D. Standardized tests are an effective way to hold our schools accountable | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| E. Standardized tests have unfair impacts on students of color | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| F. We have too many standardized tests | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| G. Money spent on standardized tests could be put to better uses | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |

3. Discipline: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. Our local schools are safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| B. Our schools should suspend and expel more students | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| C. I support zero tolerance policies and mandatory punishments | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| D. There is racial bias in our school's disciplinary policies and practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| E. We should spend more money on prevention than punishment | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| F. I would prefer more counselors and nurses instead of more security guards | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |

4. Teaching: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. I am satisfied with the quality of teachers at our local schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| B. Our school needs more teachers who are qualified in their subject area | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| C. Investing in high-quality teachers is the most important thing schools can do | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |

5. Class size: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. The classes at our local schools are overcrowded | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| B. We need more classroom space at our schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| C. Our school facilities are badly in need of repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |

Local Racial Equity Report: Part 1, Data Chart

School District: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Person/Organization submitting this report: _____ Date: _____

(Note: Use “NA” if information is not available. Attach additional information if you run out of space.)

| Information Requested | Local School District | State Dept. of Education |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Expenditures for school security during the 1999-2000 school year. | | |
| 2. Expenditures for school security during the 2000-2001 school year. | | |
| 3. Total number of suspensions and expulsions during 1999-2000 school year. | | |
| 4. Total number of suspensions and expulsions during 2000-2001 school year. | | |
| 5. The total expenditures for standardized testing in the 1999-2000 school year. | | |
| 6. The total expenditures for standardized testing in the 2000-2001 school year. | | |
| 7. The projected expenditures for standardized testing in the 2001-02 school year. | | |
| 8. What standardized tests are administered at each grade level? | | |
| 9. What is the number and percentage of students failing the standardized tests at each grade level, for the most recent year these figures are available? | | |
| 10. How many teachers lack a full teaching credentials for their subject areas? | | |
| 11. How many teachers are teaching with an emergency permit or waiver of requirements? | | |
| 12. How many teachers are teaching outside of their qualified subject area? | | |
| 13. How many teacher positions are filled by long-term substitutes? | | |
| 14. What is the total number of underqualified teachers? | | |
| 15. What is the maximum class size at each grade level? | | |
| 16. What is the average class size at each grade level? | | |
| 17. What is the number and percent of classes that exceeded the state or local maximum class size level? | | |
| 18. What is the number and percent of schools that exceeded the school size limits, if any? | | |

() Attach a copy of the number of local and state suspensions and expulsions, disaggregated by race.

() Attach a copy of the standardized test failure rates for each grade level, disaggregated by race.

Local Racial Equity Report: Part 2, Survey Results

Date: _____ School District: _____ City/State: _____

FOR EACH QUESTION, WRITE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES FOR THE PEOPLE YOU SURVEYED

Respondent's Background: Check which ones apply to you:

Role: () parent of school-aged children () student () teacher () school administrator
 Race: () African American () Latino/a () Asian American () Native American () White () Mixed race
 Is the local school where you (or your child attend): () majority white students, or () majority students of color

1. Spending Priorities: For each item below, do you think your schools should spend more, less or the same as now?

| | More | Less | Same | | More | Less | Same |
|------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| • standardized testing | () | () | () | • school security | () | () | () |
| • improved teaching | () | () | () | • smaller class sizes | () | () | () |
| • teacher salaries | () | () | () | • new school facilities | () | () | () |

2. Standardized Tests: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| A. Standardized tests are a good measure of intelligence and ability | () Agree | () Disagree |
| B. Standardized tests help improve our schools | () Agree | () Disagree |
| C. Time spent preparing for, and taking, standardized tests is a good use of time | () Agree | () Disagree |
| D. Standardized tests are an effective way to hold our schools accountable | () Agree | () Disagree |
| E. Standardized tests have unfair impacts on students of color | () Agree | () Disagree |
| F. We have too many standardized tests | () Agree | () Disagree |
| G. Money spent on standardized tests could be put to better uses | () Agree | () Disagree |

3. Discipline: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| A. Our local schools are safe | () Agree | () Disagree |
| B. Our schools should suspend and expel more students | () Agree | () Disagree |
| C. I support zero tolerance policies and other mandatory punishments | () Agree | () Disagree |
| D. There is racial bias in our school's disciplinary policies and practices | () Agree | () Disagree |
| E. We should spend more money on prevention than punishment | () Agree | () Disagree |
| F. I would prefer more counselors and nurses instead of more security guards | () Agree | () Disagree |

4. Teaching: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| A. I am satisfied with the quality of teachers at our local schools | () Agree | () Disagree |
| B. Our school needs more teachers who are qualified in their subject areas | () Agree | () Disagree |
| C. Investing in high-quality teachers is the most important thing schools can do | () Agree | () Disagree |

5. Class size: For each of the following statements, do you agree or disagree:

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| A. The classes at our local schools are overcrowded | () Agree | () Disagree |
| B. We need more classroom space at our schools | () Agree | () Disagree |
| C. Our school facilities are badly in need of repair | () Agree | () Disagree |

Local Racial Equity Report: Part 3, Quotes and Stories

Instructions: For each question, get a 1-2 sentence quote from a different person, then write it in the space provided. Fill in the person's name, their role, their grade level (for students), and whether their school has a majority of white students or a majority of students of color. Ask them to talk about the racial impacts of the issues they're discussing.

| Question | Quote | Person's name (if willing to be identified) | ROLE: Parent (P) Student (S), Teacher (T)? | Schools are majority students of color (SOC) or white (W)? | Grade Level (1-12) |
|---|-------|---|---|--|--------------------|
| 1. Comment on any racial bias in local school disciplinary policies or practices . | | | | | |
| 2. Comment on school security at the local schools. | | | | | |
| 3. Comment on the racial impact of standardized testing at the local schools. | | | | | |
| 4. Comment on teacher quality at the local schools. | | | | | |
| 5. Comment on teacher shortages at the local schools. | | | | | |
| 6. Comment on overcrowding at the local schools. | | | | | |
| 7. Comment on the physical conditions of the local schools. | | | | | |

8. Are there other interesting findings, anecdotes or stories about racial equity in your schools? (use extra paper)

9. Are there photos you can provide that illustrate racial inequalities in the conditions at your schools (e.g. an inner-city school with broken windows and security fences vs. a wealthier school that appears less militarized)?

Send report to ERASE, Applied Research Center, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611. Fax: 510-653-3427.

National Report on Racial Equity in Schools

The Applied Research Center, in conjunction with community-based organizations from around the country, will compile and release a national report about key policy trends and spending priorities related to racial equity in schools.

The report will use the frame of racial profiling in our schools to highlight the punitive effects of high-stakes testing and high-security schools. The hazards of learning while Black or Brown will be documented.

The report will include:

1. National data on
 - policy mandates and increased spending on high-stakes testing
 - policy mandates and increased spending on school security and disciplinary actions
 - failures to sufficiently address overcrowded classes and the need for more high-quality teachers.
2. Local data that includes
 - statistics and budget figures from local school districts and state Departments of Education
 - opinion surveys of parents and students
 - stories and quotes from community members that illustrate the patterns of racial profiling and punishment
3. Policy and spending recommendations such as those in the SMART Schools proposal, with emphasis on
 - high-quality teaching
 - small schools and class sizes

Public Release: There will be a national release of the report, along with local releases by community groups that have participated in data collection.

Action Ideas: National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

Document Racial Inequities:

- Submit public information requests to your local school district and state Department of Education to get data on key school policies and expenditures.
- Conduct opinion surveys of local parents and students on racial equity issues in your schools.
- Collect quotes, anecdotes and stories about racial equity issues in your schools
- Compile the data into a Local School Equity Report.
- If public agencies do not release requested data, make it public and hold a protest action.

Hold Public Actions:

- Hold a news conference on the National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools to announce your research findings. Involve parents, students, teachers and other community members.
- Plan a creative public action. Hold a rally in front of your school district headquarters. Hold a mock “lock down” to illustrate and exaggerate the militarization of your maximum-security schools. Hold a march from a poor school to a rich one to contrast the inequalities, or from an inner-city school to the local school district headquarters.
- Get on the agenda at a school board meeting to announce the findings of the report. Get a large delegation to attend with signs saying “Stop Racial Profiling in Schools” and “Unequal Schools = Racial Discrimination.”
- Get media coverage. Write letters to the editor and op-eds/guest editorials. Meet with the editorial board of your local newspapers.

Build Support:

- Do presentations and teach-in workshops with interested groups at their meetings and events. Be sure to have some sign-up sheets and specific tasks you can ask people to do so they can immediately join your efforts.

Lobbying:

- Meet with your school board members, state legislators and U.S. Congresspersons and Senators to oppose racist policies and support school reforms that advance racial equity.
- Contact elected representatives by letters, postcards, phone-calls, e-mails. Hold a letter-writing party for your friends, community members, and neighbors to write letters to your elected officials.

*Get an Action Kit from: ERASE Initiative, Applied Research Center, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611.
Phone: 510-653-3415, Fax: 510-653-3427 Website: www.arc.org E-mail: ERASE@arc.org*

Media Messages: National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

What's the problem?

- Racial Profiling in Schools: Our report highlights the hazards of Learning While Black or Brown. Learning While Black or Brown in the U.S. has become a crime. The real crime is the perpetuation of racially discriminatory policies and funding priorities.
- High-Stakes Tests: High-stakes testing is a sophisticated form of racial profiling and punishment of students of color. High-stakes tests largely blame students of color for the systemic inequities and failures of our schools. Unequal inputs yield unequal outcomes.
- Maximum-Security Schools: The racial profiling that's prevalent in our criminal justice system is a significant dynamic in our schools. Students are leaving school with police records instead of diplomas. Our maximum-security schools are becoming pipelines to prison.

Who's responsible?

- Elected officials who are passing education initiatives that have racially discriminatory impacts.
- Our President, many members of Congress, many governors, and state legislators have gone overboard with school testing and school security initiatives instead of supporting things that work, like high-quality teachers and smaller class sizes.

What's the solution?

- Racial equity must be an essential focus for all school policies and spending.
- Students need supports, not sanctions. Punitive policies detract attention and resources from positive reforms like more high-quality teachers and smaller class sizes.
- Top-Notch Teaching: Every student in every class deserves a top-notch teacher who has the skills to teach in today's racially, culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse classrooms. Providing a top-notch teacher in every class should be at the top of our national priorities.
- Smaller Schools and Reduced Class Size: Ample funding must be targeted to the highest need areas in order to enable them to acquire new and qualified staff and facilities that are conducive to learning.

Timeline for the National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools

July

July 13-14

Week 3-4

- **ERASE Partners national gathering**
- Submit public information requests to local school district, state Dept. of Education.
- Follow-up with public agencies to make sure they produce the requested information
- Talk to other local groups and ask them to participate in the National Day of Action.

August

Week 1

Week 2-3

Week 4

- Conduct local surveys with 100 students and parents
- Conduct local interviews to get some quotes from key stakeholders
- at the beginning of the new school year, have a recruitment drive to get more people involved in your organizing efforts.
- Tabulate survey results

September

Week 1

Sep. 7

- Compile Local Racial Justice Report based on data, surveys and quotes collected
- **Send Local Racial Justice Report to ARC to include in national report.**
- Develop plans for local action in October.

October

Week 1-2

Week 3

Oct. 30

- Develop press materials (local news releases on your findings, letters to ed., op-eds)
- Begin media contacts
- Recruit individuals and allied organizations to turn out for local public action/event next
- **National Day of Action for Racial Justice in Schools**
 - local groups hold local public events (actions, news conferences, etc.)
 - ARC releases national report to media

November

Week 1

- Do follow-up media work (op-eds, letters to the editor, etc.) to keep issue visible.

ERASE PARTNERS

WHO we are: The ERASE (Expose Racism and Advance School Excellence) Partnership is an organized network of community-based organizations with grassroots constituencies committed to actively challenging institutional racism in schools and engage in collaborative activities to advance racial justice and academic excellence for all students.

WHY we exist: There is a multi-tiered public education system in the U.S. which affords ample educational opportunities for some, while providing seriously deficient options for many. Seeking to address this system of educational apartheid, in 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, ruling that "separate but equal" schools were unconstitutional. Yet more than a half-century later, U.S. schools remain widely inadequate and unequal in funding and staffing, resulting in wide gaps in student achievement, especially across race. Educational equity is an unfulfilled promise.

These profound, pervasive and persistent disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes are evidence of institutional racism in schools and school systems across the country. Institutional racism, whether intentional or not a defining factor in U.S. schools. Racism interacts with other factors (such as class, gender, language and resident status) to determine students' educational success and life opportunities. Meanwhile, the entire institution of public education is threatened by inadequate and unequal funding, vouchers and privatization, and public funding that prioritizes prisons and punitive programs over education and support.

WHAT we believe: We believe that inclusive, equitable and excellent public education is a cornerstone of a pluralistic, democratic society. We believe that every student is capable of academic success and has the right to a free, high-quality public education. All students must be treated as "gifted" and provided full access to the highest quality education possible. Students must be allowed to reach their full potential: to express themselves and their talents, exercise their rights, and pursue their educational interests. In order to achieve equity and academic excellence for all students, institutional racism must be directly acknowledged and confronted.

Schools must provide an environment conducive to learning with challenging, relevant, multi-cultural and anti-racist curricula and pedagogy. School systems at the local, state, and federal level, must guarantee an equitable distribution of funding, staffing and educational resources to all schools and students. Schools and school systems must fully and publicly report key indicators of racial equity and academic quality, dismantle any policies, programs or practices that result in racial disparities, and implement goals, measures and policies that have equitable results. Students and parents must play a leading role in school reform—all school policies and practices must have full and representative public input. Equity and academic excellence for all students should be the defining measures of school success.

ERASE Partners: Issue Positions

| Issue Area | We are AGAINST... | We are FOR... |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Testing & Academic Achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high-stakes tests that punish people for having unequal educational opportunities with sanctions that jeopardize futures. • racial disparities in academic outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple measures that authentically assess students' different abilities • culturally appropriate tests that are valid measurement instruments |
| Tracking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • racial tracking that separates students <u>within</u> schools based on assumed ability differences and results in unequal opportunities and expectations. • racial tracking <u>across</u> schools that denies students, especially students of color, access to high-performing schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to high-quality education and advanced placement courses, to prepare students for college or other options. • all students have access to the highest quality schools and education. |
| Teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • underqualified teachers who are not fully prepared, certified, and teaching in their field of expertise. • a racially disproportionate teaching force, relative to the student body. • racial bias in hiring and promotion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equal access to highly-skilled, fully-qualified teachers. • recruitment, training and retention that targets teachers of color. • high-quality professional development to expand teachers' ability to teach a diverse student body, with ways to relieve under-performing teachers. |
| Curriculum and Pedagogy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • culturally-biased and dated curriculum • outdated textbooks, lack of quality learning materials, and unavailability of technology resources. • corporate-sponsored curriculum materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusive and relevant multi-cultural curriculum. • access to ample, high-quality learning materials and resources. • learning materials free of corporate bias. |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mono-cultural and English-only instruction, educational materials, and school services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to bilingual / dual language curriculum and programs for all students so all students can become bilingual • language-appropriate programs so families of all students can participate in schools |

| Issue Area | We are AGAINST... | We are FOR... |
|--|---|---|
| Discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • racial bias in disciplinary referrals and punishment • punitive emphasis with overuse of suspensions and expulsions • zero tolerance policies that result in unfair punishments • police in schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fair treatment and due process for all • prevention emphasis with a focus on improving the overall school climate • alternatives to school exclusions; expanded teacher training in classroom management and cultural sensitivity • full reporting of all disciplinary referrals and actions, disaggregated by race |
| Funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsidizing private schools with public funding, such as vouchers, taking away money from public schools • corporate and private funding that can bias curriculum and resource distribution. • school funding based on unequal local property value • funding caps and restrictions on generating public revenue for schools • decreasing the federal government's role and responsibility for ensuring ample and equitable school funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use public funds only for public schools, public schools should be publicly funded • more federal funding for high-need schools • targeted funding to highest needs and programs that benefit most students • a strong and active role of the federal government in funding schools and ensuring equal access to school resources and educational opportunities. |
| School Facilities and Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dilapidated facilities and overcrowded classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilities, class sizes, and a learning environment conducive to student learning • Schools should be involved in the local community. |
| Public Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of public access to information • lack of user-friendly information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full public reporting and notice for all school matters • data disaggregated by race |
| School Governance and Public Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of full community representation, public participation, and public accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local participation and representation in school governance • full public input and participation in school governance and expenditures |

ERASE Partners Membership Agreement

We wish to become an ERASE Partner and agree to the following:

- We will attend national convenings of the ERASE Partners
- We will pay an annual dues of \$100 to support the work of the ERASE Partners
- We will participate in ERASE partnership communications and collaborative activities

We agree with the ERASE Partnership Mission Statement.

We also agree with the ERASE Partners Issue Positions, with the following exceptions (list below any ERASE issue positions your organization does not support):

The issues our organization is most actively involved in includes (list below):

Organization Information

Organization: _____ Date: _____

Contact Person: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Return form with membership dues to: ERASE, Applied Research Center, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611