

WISCONSIN PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

August 26, 2020. *Statement regarding recent police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha from Wisconsin Public Education Network Executive Director Heather DuBois Bourenane, and board president Dr. Julie Underwood, on behalf of the board of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools.*

The children are watching. Let them see us do the right thing.

This week's tragedy in Kenosha is not a unique situation in our state or our nation: a Black man, Jacob Blake, shot by police.

Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by police at close range with his three children in the car.

His children will never unsee this unspeakably painful sight. All of our children continue to watch as additional violence unfolds. All of our children now bear witness to the ways violence begets more violence and are looking for the safety, comfort, and leadership they deserve.

We cannot ignore what these children have seen.

We cannot ignore the immeasurable trauma of racist violence.

We cannot be silent when our systems, institutions, and now communities put our children directly in harm's way and force them to bear witness to our inhumanity.

We cannot unsee the policies and practices built into our systems that allow Wisconsin to remain worst in the nation for both incarceration rates of Black men and racial disparities for Black children in our schools.*

We cannot unsee the role that over-investing in incarceration and policing Black communities and under-investing in education plays in perpetuating the attitudes and policies at the root of this violence.

This is not how we want to be in community together. We support the students, educators, parents, and our partners who call for uniting to name and end these racist practices in all of our public institutions. To do this, we must make racial equity a priority not just in our words, but in our policies, budgets, and everyday practice at all levels. We can start by acknowledging that Wisconsin massively overspends on policing and incarceration and reallocate these funds to restore communities, invest in what's good for kids, and address the lasting trauma of incidents like these. It is past time to get at the roots of this dehumanization -- to stop endorsing these racist acts of violence with budgets and policies that perpetuate them, to empower Black children, their families, and invest in their futures.

Our children need to see that Black Lives Matter. Let our children see us do the right thing.

WISCONSIN PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK RK

* References:

- State Bar of Wisconsin: [Mass Incarceration: The Fiscal & Social Costs](#)
- State Bar of Wisconsin: [On Racial Equity: 26 Voices](#)
- Wisconsin Budget Project: [Prison Price Tag: The High Cost of Wisconsin's Corrections Policies](#)
- Vera Institute of Justice: [Incarceration Trends in Wisconsin](#)
- Pawan Naidu in *The Observatory*: [Does Wisconsin Spend More on Prisons than on the UW System?](#)
- Denise Lockwood in the *Racine County Eye*: [Black Men Speak: Conversations about Race in Racine](#)