



June 9, 2020

The Iowa School Counselor Association stands with our members to condemn racism and incidents of police brutality. We acknowledge that members of the Black community are angry, sad, and frustrated with the ongoing racism and lack of response to meaningless killings and the national rhetoric around racism. The deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor have highlighted the work left to do. We acknowledge the systemic racism and oppression that exists in our society today that have led to the current situation. We believe it is important to condemn the actions of police officers who use excessive force, open a dialogue about racism, and listen to our Black community about their truths. However, we also know **words aren't enough.**

Below are steps the ISCA board will begin to take to continue to support school counselors and challenge counselors to advocate for equity in schools:

- We are working to secure a pre-conference session for our November conference on ways to address racism and discrimination in our schools.
- We invite you to join a book study for *Interrupting Racism: Equity and Social Justice in School Counseling* by Rebecca Atkins and Alicia Oglesby; *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* by Robin DiAngelo; and *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Daniel Tatum ([sign-up here](#)).
- We invite school counselors who have experience closing the achievement gap for racial minority students, especially Black students and other students of color, to present at our November conference. Presentations regarding racism and supporting minority students will be prioritized along with trauma-informed practices and response to COVID-19.
- We are partnering with our Midwest School Counseling Association neighbors - Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and South Dakota - to learn, listen, and develop strategies to address racism in our schools.
- We have created a list of resources and information for school counselors, including professional development opportunities and challenge school counselors to tackle this work and share your insights (see below).

As we work toward this goal, we challenge you to begin in a way that works best for you with the following ideas:

- **Professional Development:** You can use [this action plan template](#) to develop your plan to increase your knowledge and understanding of racism and white privilege. ASCA resources, webinars from organizations supporting black students and human rights, articles and books are shared on our website to help in your professional development plan.
- **Systemic Change:** What is your data showing about students of color? What policies are in place at your school that are biased against students of color? (e.g. - Suspension policies, attendance policies, AP enrollment requirements, TAG identification procedures, IEP identification, etc.)
- **Advocacy:** Who can you share your data with to assist in advocating for changes? When are the leadership meetings in your building or district?
- **Collaboration:** What community partnerships can you establish that will support students of color? How can you leverage your circles of influence to help further this work?
- **Leadership:** “We must be the change we wish to see in the world” (Gandhi). How can you lead anti-racism efforts in your school or community so that things will be different for your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren?

Reflect on these questions and think about what you can do today, a month from now, 6 months from now. Make a commitment to actions to further your anti-racist education. We are listening and learning along with you. If there are further resources or information that you need, please let us know. Contact information for board members can be found [here](#).

Sincerely,

ISCA Board