

A Message From the Board of Directors of the Interstate Migrant Education Council Regarding Equity and Racial Equality in support of “Black Lives Matter.”

In the past few months we have been experiencing a changing world impacting not only how we think about our health and education but racial equality as well. The coronavirus (COVID-19) and the George Floyd incident have lit a fire worldwide addressing issues that we can no longer ignore and which positive action is long overdue. Both of these will have a tremendous impact on current and future generations. We in education will be charged to work toward solving the issues at hand and preparing generations of migrant children for the future.

The Interstate Migrant Council (IMEC) in essence has been addressing health and equity issues for years given the population we serve. As such, it only makes sense that IMEC recognize and support the issues of equity as they relate to the current issue and movement of Black Lives Matter! The loss of life should not be the vehicle that brings attention to the issues of racial inequality. Many of these issues are similar to those faced by migrant children and their families of which migrant educators have addressed for years.

Many of you may recall Edward R. Murrow’s 1960 documentary “Harvest of Shame” which focused on the educational and health issues of the families and children of the migrant farmworkers. This documentary had some focuses and reflections of the African American farmworkers who have been a part of the migrant family history. This sheds light on the fact that over 90% of the migrant families and students we serve are children of color.

With the current conversation on equity as a result of the George Floyd incident it is more important than ever that this nation’s educational systems from federal to state to local provide strong leadership and partnerships in addressing equality for groups including African Americans and the cultural rainbow of migrant students and their families that exist today. We must remember that African Americans were brought to the America’s under lock and key. It is time to unlock the locks by supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and making equity and equality a reality!

So where does IMEC fit in to this scenario and how can IMEC support the effort?

IMEC member states can do the following:

- Make an IMEC policy statement in support of an equitable education for all children of color along with all migrant students.
- Review the policy statements of your state education department to see if it’s in line with today’s issues and needs.
- Review federal equity and civil rights legislation and advocate for its proper implementation.
- Review state department of education (SEA), regional education service districts (RESN) and local educational districts (LEA) equity frameworks.
- Identify resources on anti-racism and culturally relevant curriculum.
- Review the SEA; RESN and LEA equity plan for access to technology and hardware.
- Recommend that SEAs conduct equity audits.
- Provide professional development (PD) to migrant staff, teaching staff, administrators, parents and stakeholders which focus on equity and anti-racism.
- Work with school administrators to ensure an inclusive environment for students of color.
- Work with students and families of color to ensure their voice is included and discuss issues of school culture and belonging.
- Focus on solutions which properly address the issues identified
- Develop partnerships with support organizations
- Be aware of the social emotional needs of students of color, migrant students and staff
- IMEC as an organization will serve as an Interstate depository and distributor of resource materials provided by the membership and other selected sources to be shared with the IMEC members

Change does not come easy! As an organization that for many years continually addressed inequalities in regard to educational equity for migrant students we will increase our efforts to do better as mentioned above. **No child or human being should have to live in fear in a society that should be inclusive for all.** IMEC will continue to advocate for a bias free environment so that future generations of leaders will have an opportunity to continue to change this world and make it a better place for all! We are still in the period of the “Harvest of Hope”. Let us all continue to contribute in our own way and continue the conversations and actions.