



June 4, 2020

### **SEF Statement on Equity and Racial Justice**

In light of the ongoing senseless murders of Black Americans at the hands of police officers, the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) stands in solidarity with peaceful demonstrators protesting the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black men and women in the United States. We support communities all across the globe demanding an end to police brutality and disparate criminal justice outcomes for Black Americans. We know, however, since enslavement, Black Americans have faced systemic and institutional racism. But what we must abruptly confront is that our work to guarantee equity and justice for the Black community is nowhere close to being done.

Because in education, equity and justice mean that all students—regardless of their race or income – have opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential. But we know that Black and Brown students are [four times](#) more likely to be taught by an uncertified teacher. Black students still have [fewer opportunities](#) to access advanced coursework and gifted and talented programs.

Equity and justice in education mean guaranteeing all Black children the right to a high-quality early childhood education or child care program. But we know that Black children still face [additional barriers](#) to accessing and remaining in high-quality early education programs.

Equity and justice in education mean opposing policies that perpetuate a segregated and unequal school system. But we know that more than [300](#) school districts across the nation are still under open desegregation orders by the federal government.

Equity and justice in education mean dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline through the implementation of restorative justice policies and the removal of armed officers from school buildings to prevent [police brutality](#) in our schools. But we know that Black students are [disproportionately](#) arrested for school disciplinary incidents.

Equity and justice in education mean funding and supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) at the same level as other, non-HBCU colleges and universities. But we know that, time and again, these institutions are forced to submit [lawsuits](#) to receive equitable funds.

Many people may find themselves feeling fearful, angry, or even ashamed at this moment. And that is ok. Empathy for and understanding of the plight of our nation's Black community are necessary to guarantee every Black child in this country the opportunity to receive an excellent education – one that is free of police brutality and racism. Today on behalf of our nation's beautiful Black children and neighborhoods, let's collectively stand together, listen, and use our resources to make Black schools and communities safe places to grow and excel.

Sincerely,  
Raymond C. Pierce and the SEF Team