Resolution for Building an Anti-Racist Union

Passed by the Boston Teachers Union

Membership Meeting on June 10, 2020

WHEREAS, the Boston Teachers Union is an organization that believes in serving our students, schools, communities, and the teachers, school nurses, psychologists, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and substitute teachers that work in them of every race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity.

WHEREAS, the [Boston Teachers Union](https://btu.org/about/)’s stated values are that we are “*united against all forms of prejudice and bigotry that would seek to devalue the lives or liberties of our students, families or colleagues*,”

WHEREAS, BTU President Jessica Tang stated in her May 31, 2020 statement of solidarity with our Black families and community, *“We, as educators serving predominantly Black, Latinx, APIA, and indigenous students, have a duty to confront and undo our own internalized prejudices and bias, and to fight to transform the systems that perpetuate and enforce them.”*

WHEREAS, institutionalized racism has allowed for and continues to allow for the systematic oppression of Black people in this country on a daily basis, and as Jessica Tang [states](https://btu.org/boston-teachers-union-issues-statement-of-solidarity-with-our-black-families-and-community-denounces-anti-black-racism-and-police-brutality/?fbclid=IwAR2ISf3NbowS2dWA9ao8xSwx_CRLPd2RrdXhemyw9FXA3zBIL_AcDXbbDow), “*Our society is built on systems and institutions that continue to oppress and harm black people and perpetuate racism and white supremacy.*” This can be seen in the disproportionate impact that the coronavirus crisis is having on Black lives, with Black Americans being [3x as likely to die of coronavirus](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/20/black-americans-death-rate-covid-19-coronavirus) than white people, and 1 in every 2,000 Black Americans have died from COVID-19.

WHEREAS, we live in a “[Commonwealth that spends more on its prisons than it does on its 29 public colleges and universities.](https://massteacher.org/news/2020/06/say-their-names)”

WHEREAS, 1011 people have been shot and killed by police in the last year as of May 19, 2020, [according to the Washington Post Police Shooting Database](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/), not including those who have died in custody, and according to [MappingPoliceViolence.org](https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/), Black people are 3x more likely to be killed by police than white people. Additionally, 99% of killings by police from 2013-2019 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime.

WHEREAS, four police officers participated in the death of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A white police officer named Derek Chauvin kneeled on Mr. Floyd’s neck for over 8 minutes while Mr. Floyd begged for his life. Thomas Lane, Tou Thao, and J. Alexander Keung, helped in restraining Mr. Floyd and watched and participated in this act of violence.

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools spends over [4 million dollars](https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/domain/184/budgetvisualization/index.html#/CentralOfficeSpend) to have Boston School Police in schools while Minneapolis Public Schools just cut their over [$1 million dollar](http://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/minneapolis-students-pressure-school-district-to-sever-ties-/#:~:text=In%202017%2C%20MPS%20renewed%20a,%241%20million%20for%20the%20program) contract with their Student Resource Officers (SROs), Portland Public Schools will be [removing city police officers](https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2020/06/portland-superintendent-says-hes-discontinuing-school-resource-officer-program.html) from their schools, and Chicago Public Schools are currently exploring cutting their contract with police as well.

WHEREAS, as educators and union members that support students and families, we recognize the need to fight racial bias, discrimination, wrongful punishment, and the abuse of Black and Brown people in and out of schools,

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union mourns and condemns the killing of George Floyd along with countless other Black people who have been killed by police and white supremacists, such as Breonna Taylor, Dontre Hamilton, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castile, and in Boston, Terrance Coleman, Usaamah Rahim, Denis Reynoso, and Burrell Ramsey-White.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union supports the arrests of Derek Chauvin and the arrests of the three other police officers, Thomas Lane, Tou Thao, and J. Alexander Keung, who were involved in the death of George Floyd. Right now, the situation on the ground in Minneapolis is changing rapidly, but we stand in ongoing support of the demands of the movement organizing on the ground in the Twin Cities, especially the Black Visions Collective, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en La Lucha, and Reclaim the Block Minnesota.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union calls on BPS to remove all police from schools including Boston School Police, the Boston Police Department (BPD) (including BPD's school unit), and all other law enforcement. Furthermore, BTU calls for BPS to invest the $4 million dollar it currently spends on the Boston School Police into mental health services and restorative justice practices in our schools.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union will provide a minimum of 10 hours of anti-racist training for BTU members throughout the year, including Building Representatives, Executive Board Members, elected officers, and negotiating team members as developed and run by rank and file members in collaboration with existing anti-racist organizations, to begin by or before Sept. 1, 2020 and every year thereafter. We call on the negotiating team to advocate for mandatory racial justice training during contract negotiations and to make it a contract priority.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union will endorse the Ethnic Studies Now Committee’s Proposal to advocate for the long-term sustainable implementation of Ethnic Studies in the district, through rank-and-file teacher membership of the district’s Ethnic Studies steering committee, the establishment of BTU teacher-coach positions to support teachers piloting Ethnic Studies, and permanent funding for Ethnic Studies in BPS, with teacher-organizers and student-organizers leading the way.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union will continue its Inclusion Done Right Campaign that has found that Boston Public School students of color are disproportionately placed in segregated settings and overrepresented in our special education system. Inclusion Done Right demands that students of color, particularly African American males, deserve high-quality inclusive schools that include multiple-staff, rather than multiple-licensed teachers. All students, but especially those with disabilities deserve teachers with whom are trained and experienced in de-escalation techniques to access curriculum in the least-restrictive setting possible.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union calls for a full time mental health professional in every school, as well as a call for those involved in enforcing the code of conduct to receive anti-racist and restorative justice training in order to uphold Restorative Justice principles for students as well as staff.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union endorses the [campaign](http://bit.ly/defundboscops) of community groups (including groups run by and for young people, such as [Youth Justice and Power Union](https://www.yjpu.org/), [The City School](https://thecityschool.org/), and [Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project](https://ace-ej.org/what-we-do/programs/), among others) calling for the Boston City Council to cut at least 10% of the Boston Police Department Budget (including $40 million from overtime) and urging Mayor Walsh to reinvest that money in Black and Brown communities prioritizing COVID19 relief, housing, treatment, healing, small and cooperative businesses, community centers, community-led organizations and projects, and increasing funding for youth jobs to $15 million.

THEREFORE, Boston Teachers Union will continue its support of Black Lives Matters at School Week of Action and will add the facilitation of BLM at School’s Week of Action to the job description of Building Representatives.

THEREFORE, the Boston Teachers Union will create a Truth and Reconciliation committee of members in order to begin a year long process of reflection on the ways in which white supremacy and racism have been upheld in the union and the lasting impact this has had on both educators, students, and communities of color.