



BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL TOOLKIT

WEEK OF ACTION





Virginia's Education Union

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Greetings & Introduction to the Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action Toolkit

Enclosed is Virginia Education Association's **Black Lives Matter at School Toolkit** to be used as a resource guide for advancing racial justice in Virginia's schools. Black Lives Matter at School is a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education. All educators, students, parents, unions, and community organizations are encouraged to join their annual week of action during the first week of February. To learn more, visit <https://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com/>

The goal of Black Lives Matter at School is to inspire an ongoing movement of critical reflection and honest conversation, and impactful actions in school communities for all stakeholders to engage with issues of racial justice.

The Uprising for Black lives prompted the Black Lives Matter at School movement to expand activities to a "Year of Purpose." The centerpiece of the Year of Purpose is asking educators to reflect on their own work in relationship to antiracist pedagogy and abolitionist practice, persistently challenging themselves to center Black lives in their classrooms.

The Black Lives Matter movement is a powerful, non-violent peace movement that systematically examines injustices that exist at the intersections of race, class, and gender, including mass incarceration, poverty, non-affordable housing, income disparity, homophobia, unfair immigration laws, gender inequality, and poor access to healthcare.

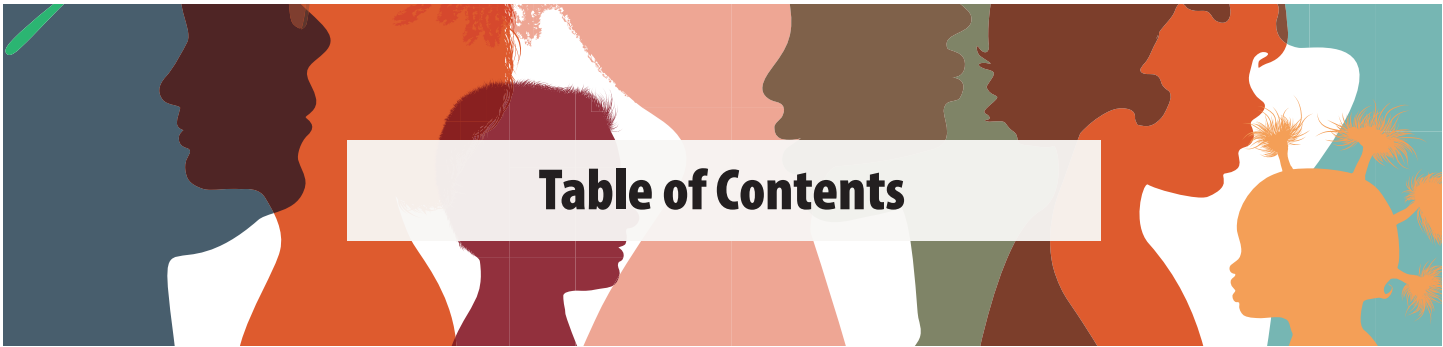
Virginia Education Association's Human and Civil Rights Department is committed to raising awareness for all issues Black educators and Black students encounter, including teachers of color, anti-racist teaching, cultural competence, and fighting for an honest, accurate education for all the Commonwealth's students. Some of the priorities of VEA's Fitz Turner Commission for Human Relations and Civil Rights are diversity for all staff, providing education and resources on social justice in the educational environment, and the recommendation that every local school division have someone responsible for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Fitz Turner Commission has also provided a section in the starter kit on how to bring a resolution to your school board.

Please review this resource to help facilitate conversations about race, including classroom-appropriate lesson plans, guides on how to have tough conversations with colleagues, students, and more. Additionally, we are ready to provide training and assistance in organizing a local team. Please contact me directly at **800-552-9554 ext. 324** or email me at **tsteele@veanea.org**.

In solidarity,

Taisha C. Steele

Taisha C. Steele, Ed.S, (she/her)
Director Human and Civil Rights



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Virginia Education Association

WHEREAS, the members of the Virginia Education Association stand for racial justice and human dignity for all of our students and colleagues and have made them core principles of our organization;

WHEREAS, the members of the National Education Association, at their 2019 national convention, took a position in support of the Black Lives Matter Week of Action during Black History Month, calling for “clear efforts to demonstrate support” for the ending of zero-tolerance school discipline policies, the hiring and mentoring of more Black educators, and the teaching of ethnic studies in public schools;

WHEREAS, there are too few Black educators and educators of color in proportion to the number of students of color in Virginia’s public schools;

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Education has approved changes to Virginia’s History and Social Science Standards of Learning to broaden our curriculum in response to recommendations made by former Governor Ralph Northam’s Commission on African American History Education in the Commonwealth;

BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Virginia Education Association join the national call for the observance of Black Lives Matter at School Week to kick off Black History Month in 2023 during the week of February 6-10;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **(name of Local)** Education Association encourages its members to wear Black Lives Matter shirts to school that week and teach lessons about the school-to-prison-pipeline, restorative justice, and Black history.



1. **Determine the type of meeting:** define the platform in which the meeting will take place, is it a panel discussion, a speakers list, or a Q & A session?
2. **Define the purpose and the outcomes:** the purpose should be well defined with an end in mind for outcomes after the event. The purpose and outcomes should be stated in the advertising of the event.
3. **Identify a host/facilitator:** there should be one person to help thread all the speeches together and continuously tie it to the theme and purpose of the event. This person should also be able to keep the flow of the meeting and ensure it stays to the purpose of the event.
4. **Encourage registration:** set up a registration page for participants. Be intentional about the information that you capture on the registration form so that you know the audience and you build a list of activists or volunteers for future engagement.
5. **Start on time, end on time:** it is more difficult to keep the attention of a virtual audience, thus, it is important to start and end at the time that is advertised. Set an annotated agenda and be sure to share the time allocated to each speaker ahead of time.
6. **Plan, Prepare, Perform:** if possible, schedule time for a “dry run” before the event, check the audio of each speaker, troubleshoot all tech components, and examine the timeframe. Also, assign someone to “technical difficulties” during the event.
7. **Rules of engagement:** share the process in which the audience can engage in the discussion, will they use the chat function only or can they speak and interact in real time? Share that throughout the event and have someone monitor the chat and respond accordingly.
8. **Share the action items:** establish action items at the end of the event. The items should be concise and measurable in order to continue the work beyond the event.

9. **Establish a plan to follow up:** be sure to follow up with the speakers to thank them for their time. The planning committee should also follow up with the attendees to keep them engaged in the work and build capacity to move the work forward and achieve the goal(s).
10. **Next steps:** this is not a one and done event! Build on the purpose and outcomes for the event and elevate the issue(s) every opportunity that you have with administrators, community leaders, parents, and union members.





Black Lives Matter Guiding Principles

Restorative Justice is the commitment to build a beloved and loving community that is sustainable and growing.

Empathy is one's ability to connect with others by building relationships built on mutual trust and understanding.

Loving Engagement is the commitment to practice justice, liberation and peace.

Diversity is the celebration and acknowledgment of differences and commonalities across cultures.

Globalism is our ability to see how we are impacted or privileged within the Black global family that exists across the world in different regions.

Transgender Affirming is the commitment to continue to make space for our trans brothers and sisters by encouraging leadership and recognizing trans-antagonistic violence.

Queer Affirming is working towards a queer-affirming network where heteronormative thinking no longer exists.

Collective Value means that all Black lives, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location, matter.

Intergenerational is a space free from ageism where we can learn from each other.

Black Families creates a space that is family friendly and free from patriarchal practices.

Black Villages is the disruption of Western nuclear family dynamics and a return to the "collective village" that takes care of each other.

Black Women is the building of women-centered spaces free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness.

Unapologetically Black is the affirmation that Black Lives Matter and that our love, and desire for justice and freedom are prerequisites for wanting that for others. These principles are the blueprint for healing and do not include nor do they support ignoring or sanitizing the ugliness and discomfort that comes with dealing with race and anti-race issues.

Resource: <https://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com/>



Elementary School Lesson Plans*

Looking at Race and Racial Identity in Children's Books

Grade Level: K–2; 3–5

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/looking-at-race-and-racial-identity-in-childrens-books>

This lesson, the second in a series, encourages students to think and talk openly about the concept of beauty, particularly as it overlaps with issues of race and racial identity.

What is Empathy

Grade Level: K–2

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/what-is-empathy>

This lesson explicitly teaches students to be more conscious of other people's feelings to create a more accepting and respectful school community.



Dealing with Dilemmas: Upstanders, Bystanders and Whistle-Blowers

Grade Level: 3 – 5; 6 – 8

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/dealing-with-dilemmas-upstanders-bystanders-and-whistleblowers>

The purpose of these lessons is to help students think about how to resolve difficult ethical decisions related to injustice. By role-playing, researching people who have made courageous ethical decisions, and writing about their own role models, students will come to understand the importance of standing up for what they believe in..



Part of a Community Online

Grade Level: K-2

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/part-of-a-community-online>

This lesson focuses on helping young children learn to participate in different kinds of digital communities. Students will solidify and work on what they know about being part of any community.

Comfort Food: Lesson for Child of the Civil Rights Movement by Paula Young Shelton

Grade Level: K-2

<https://www.civilrightsteaching.org/comfort-food>

Designed to help students make a personal connection to the civil rights movement and to recognize that people, just like themselves, came together as a community to fight against the injustices of segregation and discrimination. The use of food in the story helps students to identify with the civil rights activists, unified by a common goal and engaging in the common practice of fellowship over a meal.

* If the link does not open, please copy and paste the link into your browser or refer to Resources on page 16.



Middle School Lesson Plans*

Mini-Lesson: Introduction to the Principles of the Black Lives Matter Movement

Grade Level: 6 – 8; 9 – 12

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LbnXynTSqC0t-vtfSzYnpKjK9Zvrr1eEk9IAGRrRy8os/edit>

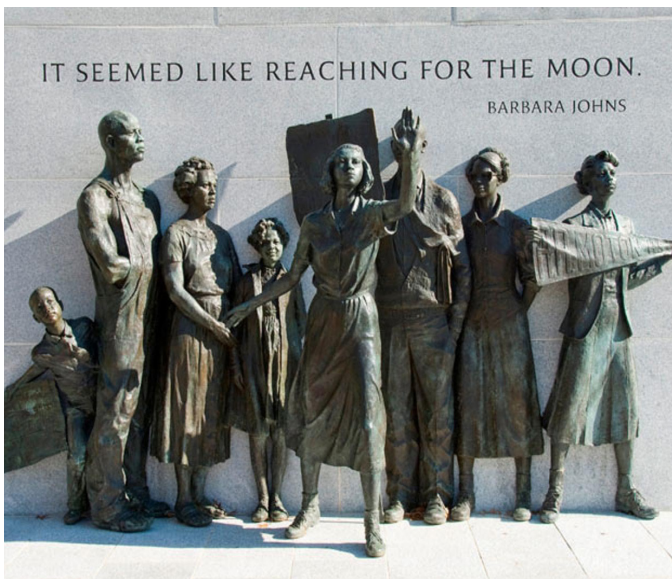
Students will be able to explain the 13 core principles of the Black Lives Matter movement and analyze the importance/significance of the 13 core principles to their local community, the United States, and the world.

Middle School BLM Week of Action Mini Lessons

Grade Level: 6 – 8

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/186fgoMIR5D-vWLctHIMnev5nWaf5TB59mgEa59jFK9-s/edit>

Lessons that are appropriate for middle school classrooms that provide articles and videos that are appropriate for shorter blocks of instructions.



How Barbara Johns Helped End Segregation

Grade Level: Middle

<https://junior.scholastic.com/pages/content-hubs/the-civil-rights-movement.html>

In 1951, there were 21 American states that required black students and white students to attend separate schools. A young African American girl named Barbara Johns knew this wasn't right—and that she had to do something about it. Her bravery led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that changed the nation forever.

Why Local Elections Matter

Grade Level: Middle

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/why-local-elections-matter>

In this lesson, students explore the ways that decisions by local government affect their lives. They'll review research and data about a few recent local elections to push back against the myth that a single vote doesn't count. They'll learn how laws in their state encourage or suppress voter engagement. And in an extension activity, eligible students learn how to register to vote.

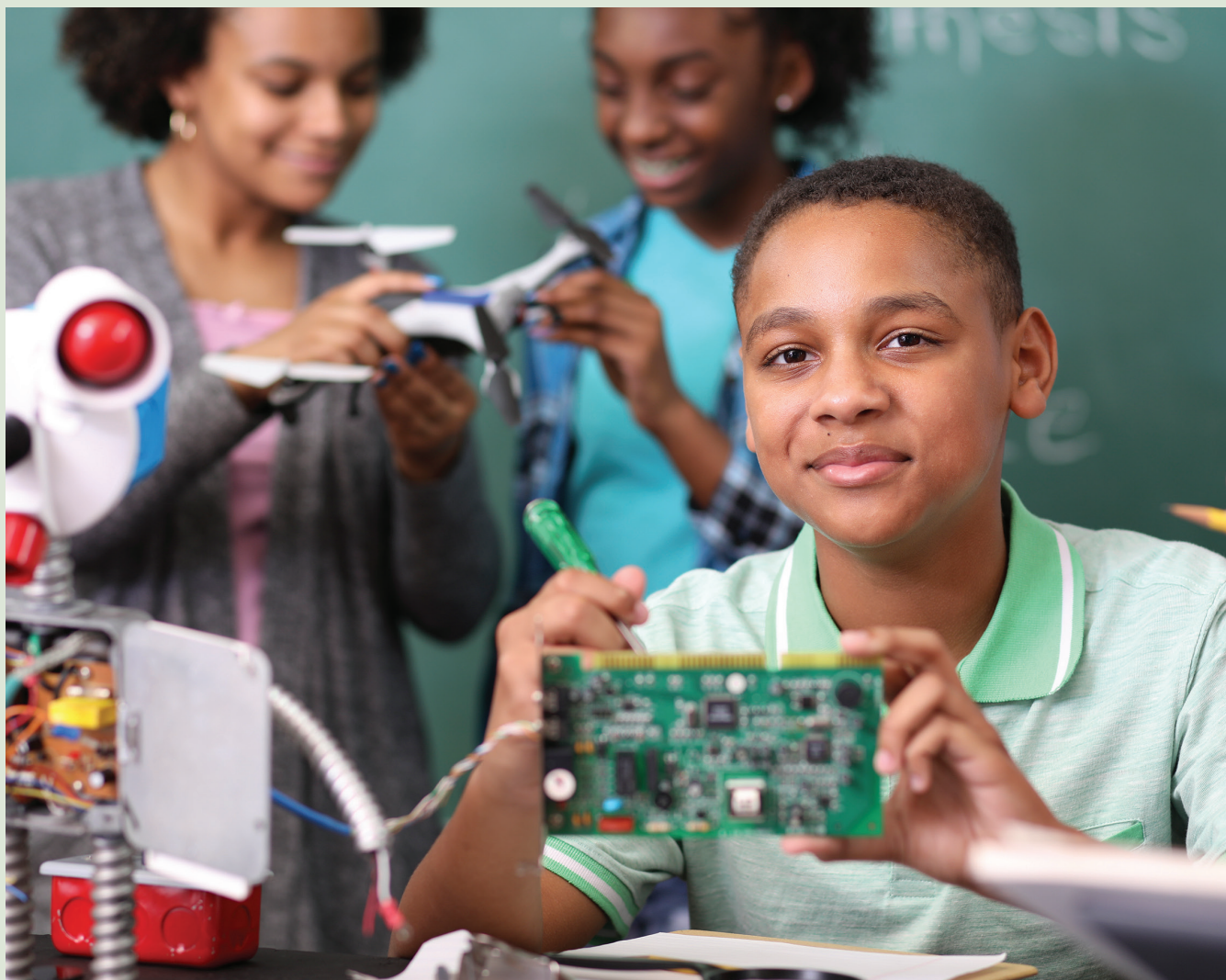
Beyond Rosa Parks: Powerful Voices for Civil Rights and Social Justice

Grade Level: 6 – 8; 9 – 12

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/beyond-rosa-parks-powerful-voices-for-civil-rights-and-social-justice>

Most history textbooks include a section about Rosa Parks in the chapter on the modern civil rights movement. However, Parks is only one among many African-American women who have worked for equal rights and social justice. This series introduces four of those activists who may be unfamiliar to students.

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High School Lesson Plans*

Mini-Lesson: Introduction to the Principles of the Black Lives Matter Movement

Grade Level: 6 – 8; 9 – 12

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LbnXynTSqC0tvtfSzYnpKjK9Zvrr1eEk9lAGRrRy8os/edit>

Students will be able to explain the 13 core principles of the Black Lives Matter movement and analyze the importance/significance of the 13 core principles to their local community, the United States, and the world.

High School BLM Week of Action Mini Lessons

Grade Level: 9 – 12

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nTAF1lvFN9UXzKy1w456zjqE-52RyRMVSQE29EFrJ2M/edit>

Lessons that are appropriate for high school classrooms that provide articles and videos that are appropriate for shorter blocks of instructions.



The Color Line

Grade Level: 9 – 12

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/color-line-colonial-laws>

A lesson on the countless colonial laws enacted to create division and inequality based on race. This helps students understand the origins of racism in the United States and who benefits. Diversity and Globalism, Ethnic Studies.

Talking About Race and Racism

Grade Level: 9 – 12

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/talking-about-race-and-racism>

What do educators need to participate in an open and honest conversation about the content of The New Jim Crow? Effective instruction about The New Jim Crow requires advanced preparation for how to talk about race and racism.

Contemporary Movements

Grade Level: 6 – 8; 9 – 12

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/contemporary-movements>

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, during which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to prominence as a spokesperson for black people seeking equality, has been the catalyst for many contemporary civil rights movements (e.g., the Chicano movement, labor movement, environmental movement, women's movement, LGBT civil rights movement, immigrant workers rights). This lesson invites students to see that they are part of a continuum in the long struggle for equal rights for all people.

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Steps to Bring Resolution to Local School Board

Black Lives Matter (BLM) at School Week is February 6-10, 2023. Black Lives Matter at School Week is celebrated by a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education.

Share the importance of Black Lives Matter at School Week to Association Members and your students. Local presidents should meet with the local membership to make a declaration of support for the resolution. Your local president and their selected team should then identify Division Equity Coordinator or appropriate Administrator in your division. Communicate and meet with Coordinator, Administrator and Division Superintendent to share information about Black Lives Matter at School Week. If the Superintendent agrees with making a declaration of support with a Resolution, then the information will go to the School Board Clerk. This will ensure that the BLM at School Week Resolution will be added to the School Board meeting agenda. Solicit your UniServ Director for support as needed.

If the division Superintendent does not agree to move forward with a declaration of support through a Resolution, local associations are encouraged to do the following activities:

- Share their support for BLM at School Week by making public remarks asking for a Resolution to be adopted by the school board.
- Help educators and the community understand the importance of BLM at School Week by using social media and other forms of public communication.
- Encourage educators to share the BLM at School Week toolkit with their school administrators, fellow educators, and school counselors.

As the National Education Association has proclaimed, “The goal of Black Lives Matter at School is to spark an ongoing movement of critical reflection and honest conversation and impactful actions in school communities for people of all ages to engage with issues of racial justice”¹.

The Fitz Turner Commission for Human Relations and Civil Rights at the Virginia Education Association hopes your local association chooses to celebrate this week in any capacity possible.

¹ <https://neaedjustice.org/black-lives-matter-at-school/>



Sample Local Resolution

(Name of Local) Education Association

WHEREAS, the members of the **(name of Local)** Education Association stand for racial justice and human dignity for all of our students and colleagues and have made them core principles of our organization;

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Contemporary Movements

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/contemporary-movements>

Additional Resources

- <https://neadjustice.org/black-lives-matter-school-resources/>
- <https://www.dcareeducators4socialjustice.org/black-lives-matter/resources/>
- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources>
- <https://www.civilrightsteaching.org/>
- <https://blacklivesmatter.com/resources/>
- <https://www.teachingforblacklives.org/>
- <https://diversebooks.org/>
- <https://colorfulpages.org/category/activities-lesson-plans/>
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ou2lkNO_1ijCJDfmasbAG8mx_7hvv1cHKmobhtcVLak/edit





VEA Commissioner

District

Brad Hutchinson

A

Elizabeth Larson

B

Anthony Swann

C

Shaniqua Williams

D

Quincy Green

E

Tavell Johnson

F

Brandon Fincham

F

Vacant

G

Tammy Potts

H

Jocelyn Forest

I

Andrea Trotter

J

Vanessa Scott

K

ChèRee Wiley

L

Holly Jackson-Conrad

M - VEA-Retired

Andrea Bolden

N

Treketta "Keeter" Harris

O

Amy Lamb

P

Christie Jones

Q

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