

Priorities for Real Integration: The Last and First 100 Days

Summary:

New York City continues to be one of the most segregated metropolitan areas in the country. There is no justification for carrying on this legacy, particularly after a global pandemic that laid bare the deep disparities and deadly consequences of segregation. NYC students and families do not deserve to have their voices excluded and silenced by leaders who refuse to innovate toward integrated schools and would rather sustain the segregated status quo. We require leadership that recognizes the urgency of instituting intentional policies and practices that increase equity, access, and inclusion.

The priorities set in this briefing are for the final 100 days of Mayor de Blasio's administration, and the first 100 days of the incoming administration to desegregate and integrate NYC public schools. It is essential for our City's school system to stop participating in the vicious cycle of systemic racism which perpetuates disparities and outcomes that harm all students, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. We must focus on a school system that supports equity, inclusivity, and abundance.

Our priorities are guided by the following principles:

1. *Advocating for Real Integration and Desegregation:* As a coalition, we call for policies that take immediate action to desegregate our schools in tandem with the implementation of policies and practices that integrate our schools.
 - a. We define desegregation as the removal of structural barriers to access that have been constructed to exclude the most marginalized students from the most well-resourced schools while isolating those with the most privilege in a small handful of schools. This perpetuates a harmful approach that offers crumbs in the form of a few more segregated seats in screened, Gifted and Talented (G&T) and specialized programs. We reject this failed approach and call for the immediate desegregation of all schools.
 - b. We define Real Integration by the "5 R's framework," created by student-led advocacy group IntegrateNYC. A truly integrated school and system is not only racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse in composition, it also appoints diverse faculty and staff, facilitates relationships across difference and values every student through a culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum, practices restorative justice and requires the equitable allocation of resources. In sum, policies and practices that forward Real Integration address the harmful consequences of segregation and encourage fostering access and opportunity for all students, particularly those from our most marginalized communities.

2. *Calling for Solidarity not Scarcity*: As a coalition, we call for solidarity as a means to combat the harmful policies and practices that accompany a scarcity mindset.
 - a. We define a scarcity mindset as perpetuating the falsehood that there are not enough opportunities for everyone in the school system, therefore students and families must fight each other for them. This call for exclusivity is often justified by the myth of meritocracy, in which students only gain access to particular opportunities because, “they worked harder than all others,” negating the impact of structural and institutional racism on marginalized groups. Scarcity permeates all social boundaries and leads to harmful competition amongst students for access to a public good—a quality education.
 - b. We define solidarity as a remedy to the perpetuation of the scarcity mindset. To combat harmful competition and exclusivity, we must come together around the reality that there is no reason to fight over exclusive access to a few segregated seats when we can instead fight for an inclusive system for all. We cannot achieve equitable and excellent schools for all by improving opportunities for some and excluding many.

We outline the necessary steps the outgoing and incoming administrations, as well as the NYC Department of Education, must take to fulfill their previously promised obligations to provide equity and excellence for all NYC students. The following sections are not meant to be piecemeal policies, but rather a holistic approach to forwarding integration in our school system and therefore should be implemented as such.

I. Implement 21st-century student assignment policies that increase access, promote inclusivity, and actively work to repair the historical harm of segregation by:

- a. Eliminating the current segregated Gifted and Talented programs this year and replacing them with schoolwide enrichment models that provide accelerated and enriched learning to all students.
- b. Permanently ending the use of middle-school screens.
- c. Requiring high school admissions to be purposeful in increasing access to historically excluded groups through the adoption of the [admissions priority score](#) structure created by IntegrateNYC and Territorial Empathy.

II. Create the conditions and accountability structures necessary for Real Integration by:

- a. The incoming mayoral administration pledging to fully fund the development of the [Mosaic Curriculum](#) over its expected timeline from now up until 2023.
 - i. Commit to aligning the curriculum with New York City and State developed frameworks for Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education.
 - ii. Commit to providing pathways for community, parent, student, and educator input and co-design.
- b. Collecting and making transparent disaggregated enrollment data of students in all schools and districts by ethnic group, gender, home language, ELL status, ability, and socioeconomic status, and ensuring the ability to cross-tabulate

between fields. Data disaggregation is especially necessary for Asian American students, as aggregated data has resulted in the continued misrepresentation of the community as a monolith and thus the upholding of segregative policies and practices.

- c. Supporting staff diversity by institutionalizing a pipeline for historically excluded groups through partnerships with public higher education institutions.
- d. Divesting in policing in schools and developing a plan to reallocate the over \$450 million school policing budget for restorative and healing-centered practices.

III. Develop community outreach efforts that elevate the voice of parents, students, and community members in decision-making processes by:

- a. Creating intentional pathways from the school level to deputy chancellor offices for community input and feedback.
 - i. Create a Chief Integration Officer position.
- b. Fully funding local law 225 established in 2019, that mandates the establishment of diversity working groups in each community school district by 2024, to ensure resources are available for a comprehensive community engagement process.
- c. Requiring the facilitation of purposeful outreach through partnerships with CBOs in community school districts beginning and/or in the process of implementing initiatives that further Real Integration.
 - i. Ensure facilitators and CBOs are empowered through NYCDOE leadership to address the needs and concerns of historically marginalized groups, inform on equitable and inclusive policies, and correct misinformation on equitable and inclusive practices.

Supported by:

*Alliance for School Integration and Desegregation
 Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
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