



September 25, 2020

To the Black Community of Loudoun County:

We, the Loudoun County School Board, the Administration of Loudoun County Public Schools, and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors sincerely apologize for the operation of segregated schools in Loudoun County and for the negative impact, damage and disadvantages to Black students and families that were caused by decisions made by the Loudoun County School Board, LCPS Administration, and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. More specifically, the additional effort required and resources provided by the Black community to obtain an equal education created hardships to which other community members were not subjected. Black people were denied rights and equal treatment.

The following timeline provides context for a long-overdue apology to the Black community of Loudoun County:

1954 - The U.S. Supreme Court declared via *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional and that public schools should integrate “with all deliberate speed”.

1956 - As documented in the minutes of meetings of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the Board of Supervisors voted on January 3 to support the proposed amendment to Section 141 of the Virginia State Constitution which ultimately allowed the use of public funds to be used for nonsectarian schools. This would have the effect of providing funding for white students to attend private schools and avoid attending integrated public schools.

On January 23, 1956, the Board of Supervisors and Loudoun County School Board met jointly and discussed, among other topics, additions to both Douglass Elementary School and Douglass High School. The two Boards felt that no steps should be taken in construction of these additions unless reasonable assurance was given by the parents of Black children of the County that they would conform to the opinion that their education could be promoted better by their continued school attendance on a segregated basis.

On August 6, 1956, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to stop funding public schools if the federal government forced integration. **The Board of Supervisors later rescinded this action on August 6, 1962.*

On September 4, 1956, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to request that Virginia Delegate Phillips and Virginia Senator Button support the Governor’s plan that was designed to ensure racial segregation, including giving the Governor the power to close any schools facing a federal desegregation order.

1963 - A U.S. federal court ordered Loudoun County to comply with *Brown v. Board of Education* and to approve all applications from Black children to attend formerly all-white schools.

1967 - A U.S. federal court ordered Loudoun County to establish geographic attendance zones regardless of race to fully integrate all schools by the 1968-1969 school year.

In addition to the blatant disregard and disrespect of Black people and their education during the era of segregation, such as inequitable school calendars, teacher salaries, facilities, transportation, as well as instructional materials, supplies and equipment, there are many examples and instances in which systemic racism, inequitable treatment, and disproportionality began and have persisted since. For example:

- The County-wide League consisted of members of the Black community that worked hard to coordinate efforts, raise money then purchase land for \$4,000 in 1939 for a high school, the Douglass School. The fact that the Black community had to not only sell the land to the School Board for \$1 in 1940, but also had to again raise money to provide furniture and books because the School Board would not is inexcusable. These actions taken by the School Board were symbolic of a lack of respect for the Black community's effort and its needs.
- There was significant resistance by the School Board and Superintendent to integrate our schools during the era of Massive Resistance and several other inequities persisted as a result, such as:
 - inequities in teacher salaries, recruitment, on-going professional learning, as well as administrative leadership development for principals and staff;
 - inequities in recruitment for college and advanced placement preparation for students;
 - a lack of diversity among applied and admitted students to the Academies of Loudoun;
 - disproportionate discipline of Black students;
 - school names and a school mascot named after or potentially named after Confederate figures and plantations;
 - the facilitation of lessons and activities that do not reflect cultural responsiveness and instead reinforce subservient gender and racial roles;
 - failure to teach students about the Black Post-Civil War communities that existed into the mid-century.

LCPS is appreciative of the organizations listed below who are deeply committed to the well-being, equity, and advancement of Black people in Loudoun County and who contributed to this letter by providing LCPS feedback on specific topics that could not go unaddressed. Thank you to the Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee (MSAAC), the Loudoun Douglass High School Alumni Association, the Black History Committee – Friends of Thomas Balch Library, and the Edwin Washington Project for your insight and contribution. We thank the aforementioned organizations and the Loudoun Branch of the NAACP, the Loudoun Freedom Center, Loudoun Diversity Council, Excellent Options, and other organizations whose continued advocacy has led to this apology and an intentional focus on racial equity in LCPS.

As one organization shared, LCPS must continually assess the status of racial equity in the school system and correct its past transgressions as it pertains to race. Although we recognize that we have yet to fully correct or eradicate matters of racial inequality, we hope that issuing this apology with genuine remorse is a valuable step followed by additional actions, including demonstrable policy changes as outlined in both the Comprehensive Equity Plan and the Action Plan to Combat Systemic Racism. We must pursue a bold, yet methodical, path of continuous improvement driven by a strong sense of urgency.