



For Immediate Release
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LDF Releases Principles for Racially Equitable and Inclusive School Re-openings

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) released a set of principles for states and localities to adopt to ensure racially equitable and inclusive school re-openings as the nation continues to struggle with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, cities and states have taken differing approaches to closures, testing, mask-wearing requirements, and quarantines. Therefore, any plans to re-open schools must consider the particular dangers to children and school personnel, especially in regions where infection rates are high. Indeed, schools should only hold in-person instruction if the virus is under control in the local community. This is not the case in most of the country. Therefore, it is imperative that all students, teachers, and schools are equipped for remote instruction. This is a racial justice imperative, given the disproportionate risk to Black children and families of severe complications and death from COVID-19.

Moreover, because of the vast inequities inherent in our educational system, any plans to re-open schools must also give due regard to existing racial and socioeconomic disparities in school districts. Plans must ensure that under-resourced school districts are provided with the tools and funding needed to meet the challenges of educating our children safely in school, and to providing quality, meaningful, and effective online instruction.

LDF's principles include:

- **Funding:** Congress must urgently allocate sufficient funds for public schools to be able to safely educate all students in-person and remotely.
- **Protecting Public Health:** Before resuming in-person instruction, schools must ensure the physical safety of all students, staff, and communities.
- **Equitable Access to School Resources During COVID-19 School Closures:** When in-person instruction is not safe, all students must have access to: 1) essential school-based services including meals, and 2) high quality distance learning, including high-speed broadband internet, their own device, and technology support.
- **Instruction and Assessment:** Instruction and assessment must be reimaged to center anti-racism, culturally-responsive teaching, and student engagement, as well as evidence-based strategies to address learning loss due to COVID-19.
- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Schools must be equipped with the necessary resources to mitigate the stress and trauma stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic school closures — and emphasize student support over exclusionary discipline practices. This should include a moratorium on suspensions. Moreover, there must

be dedicated resources for addressing the overall mental health and well-being of Black students, who have been disproportionately impacted by the economic and health consequences of the pandemic, as well as the personal and collective trauma resulting from high-profile incidents of police violence against Black people.

- **Safeguarding Workplace Protections in Schools:** Educator safety, retention, and training must be a priority for all school districts, especially for Black educators and the educators of Black students.

For more details on these protocols, please read the full descriptions [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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