

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF BLACK LIVES AND COMMITMENT TO END WHITE SUPREMACY

June 3, 2020

Dear American Educational Studies Association (AESA) Members,

We join with others in a public outcry over the inexcusable recent police killings of unarmed Black people including George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and many others. These murders are connected to a long history of racist violence by white society against Black people in the United States in which perpetrators often suffered no legal consequences and were supported by people in power, and they have become a catalyst for nationwide protests. People are protesting out of legitimate fear, mourning, frustration, and outrage at the systemic inequities ingrained in our institutional policies and social systems. We are witnessing this state-sanctioned violence continue as unarmed, mostly Black, protestors are being tear gassed and shot at with rubber bullets by police, and we are terrified and furious to hear that the occupant of the White House has threatened to deploy the U.S. military.

Rather than simply putting forward an abstract statement of concern, we want to suggest a couple of principled starting points for responses by scholars and educators. First, oppression does not come out of nowhere. Violence against Black people is produced by white supremacy, and by the white people and institutions who enforce it. In this context, liberal gestures of empathy are not enough. We need to ground our work in a revolutionary commitment against systemic anti-Blackness and white supremacy, and support real disruptions of these systems. Second, while attention is rightfully focused on the actions of the police and criminal justice system at this time, we know from our work how deeply educational spaces are implicated in systemic racism. We refuse liberal gradualism and neoliberal manipulation, and we commit ourselves to putting an end to white supremacy in schools, teaching, curriculum, and interrelated systems. Enough is enough! We believe that Foundations of Education and related fields are central sites for this social-justice-oriented antiracist work, but only if our research, advocacy, and teaching are militant, uncompromising, and courageous.

We are heartened by the multiracial uprising currently taking place, and we pledge to support it in our scholarly and practical work. We support action by our members in academic networks, but also in work and personal spaces as well as in sites of public protest. We stand with the millions of protesters throughout this country and the world demanding an end to police violence against Black people and seeking to dismantle the white supremacist institutions that perpetrate violence through social, economic and educational policies and practices that disenfranchise and devalue Black people. Within AESA, we plan to dedicate more space at the annual meeting to discussion of movement building in the context of the current crisis. Furthermore, the Executive Committee plans to engage in ongoing discussion of additional ways that we can respond as an organization.

The American Educational Studies Association is a society in which we examine, unveil, and develop interpretive, normative and critical perspectives on education and related systems. So many AESA members are already doing work in research, scholarship, home institutions, and community organizing to end oppression and promote justice. We need to recognize the pain and rage, support each other, and continue with renewed energy and determination to collaboratively do the work of dismantling racism and creating just and loving schools and societies.

AESA Executive Council

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For those who are wondering about how wider statements are created and released, this information is from our bylaws and apply to any topic:

If anyone in the membership would like to see a statement released more widely, or to a specific group or organization, there is a process for doing that. Any AESA member can send a copy of the proposed statement to the AESA President (aesapresident@gmail.com) who then brings it to the Executive Council for consideration and possible editing. It then needs to go to a membership vote. The only thing statements can't do is serve as a form of lobbying since that violates our 501c3 nonprofit status.

If you have other suggestions for the Executive Council related to what we might do during these times with and for members, please feel free to email the AESA officers and/or at-large members of the Executive Council.

Contact information is available [HERE](#).