



## Education Apartheid Day of Action – Preparing to Act

### Faith Reflection

Isaiah 61:1-8a

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign L-rd is on me, because the L-rd has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the L-rd’s favor and the day of vengeance of our G-d, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair...They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations... ‘For I, the L-rd, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing...’ “*

- In this text, what specific actions has the L-rd anointed this person to do?
- How do the fortunes of mourning/grieving people (and communities) change as a result?
- What does the L-rd love? What does the L-rd hate?
- How is educational apartheid a form of robbery?

*PRAYER: L-rd, anoint us with your Spirit to proclaim freedom and release from captivity. Restore the ancient ruins of our cities. Give us such a powerful anointing that those in power bend before Your justice and grant our demand. End educational apartheid now, in our time, and use our hands and feet and voice to end it. In Your name, may it be so.*

### Agenda/Logistics

<b>8:30am</b>	Buses leave POWER Office, Plymouth Meeting Mall
<b>9:30am</b>	POWER Philadelphia, Metro day-of briefing (on buses)
<b>10 – 11am</b>	POWER Central meetings with elected officials (State Capitol)
<b>10:45 – 11:15am</b>	Buses arrive (State Capitol)
<b>11:30am</b>	POWER activists enter security checkpoint
<b>12 – 1pm</b>	Rally (Rotunda, State Capitol)
<b>1 – 2:45pm</b>	Action (offices of Sen. Eichelberger and Rep. Hickernell)**
<b>3:00pm</b>	POWER Central debrief (St. Michael’s Lutheran)
<b>3 – 3:30pm</b>	Load buses for POWER Philadelphia, Metro^^
<b>4 – 4:30pm</b>	POWER Philadelphia and Metro debrief (on buses)
<b>6:00pm</b>	Buses return to POWER Office, Plymouth Meeting Mall

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#### OTHER DETAILS:

\*\*Following the conclusion of the action, people will leave the Capitol building and walk 2 blocks towards the Susquehanna River on the right side of the street. Our rendezvous point is **St. Michael's Lutheran Church (118 State St., Harrisburg, PA 17101)**.

^^Pizza will be available in front of the church immediately following the action; however, buses will not load at St. Michael's until 3:30 PM.

### Key Points on Racial Bias in School Funding

#### *A **DISTRIBUTION** problem...*

- There is a **strong pattern of racial bias** in how PA distributes state money to school districts.
- For school districts of similar poverty levels, whiter districts almost always receive higher per-student funding from the state than less white districts. This **pattern holds across all levels of wealth**.
- **On average**, the whitest districts get **\$1,900 per student** more than their fair share, and the least white districts get \$1,900 per student less than their fair share.
- PA's funding formula, which defines the fair share for each district, is currently applied to **only 6%** of the state funding; the other 94% is distributed in a way that is highly inequitable, especially when it comes to race.
- PA needs to **change the law to distribute 100%** of state funding through the fair formula.
- POWER is nearly alone in focusing attention on this part of the school funding problem, including its pattern of racial bias.

#### *A problem with **AMOUNT OF FUNDING**...*

- PA currently provides only **34-37%** of public education funding – among the lowest percentage of any state.
- Most of the rest comes from local property taxation. Those taxes are vastly higher in wealthier than in poorer districts.
- Looking at combined local/state funding, PA has the **worst inequity** between wealthy and poor districts of any state – **more than double the next closest state**.
- To achieve adequate funding for all districts, PA would need to increase its public education funding by between **\$3 and 4 billion**.

#### ***MISTAKES** to avoid in talking about funding...*

- "Whiter districts get higher per-student funding from the state than blacker and browner districts." When you compare dollar amounts, majority white districts actually receive lower average per-student

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funding than majority black/brown districts. It's only when you look at the **INEQUITY** in the funding (the difference between what a district gets from the state vs. what the formula says it deserves), that you see the bias against districts with more black and brown students.

- "The state funding discriminates against majority black and brown districts."

While technically true, this is too narrow a statement of the problem. Only 7% of PA's districts are minority white. The racial bias extends across the full spectrum of racial composition, so that the whiter a district is, the better it tends to be funded relative to its fair share. Districts that are 10% white are shortchanged worse on state funding than districts that are 30% white, and so on up the scale.

### **Questions to Ask One Another**

- **What's at stake for our society if educational equity is not achieved?** What are the long-term economic, social, and moral consequences?

- **What's at stake for you personally?** How does educational inequity impact your life?

- **What does your faith say to this issue?** What stories/verses/images come to mind from your faith tradition, and how can you draw upon those in this fight?

### **Songs We'll Be Singing Together**

*Please practice with your carpool group or bus on the way, so we can sing with one voice.*

#### **Come And Go**

Come and go, to that land; come and go, to that land;

Come and go, to that land where I'm bound (where I'm bound)...(repeat)

- There is free-dom, in that land...

- There's racial jus-tice, in that land...

- There's no apart-heid in that land...

- Come and go, to that land...

#### **Siyahamba (We Are Walking in the Light of G-d)**



We are walking in the light of G-d, we are walking in the light of G-d. (repeat)

We are walking, (walking)

We are walking, (OH!)

We are walking in the light of G-d. (repeat)

- We are learning...
- You are ruling in the sight of G-d...
- We are rising in the power of G-d...
- We are walking...

### **Chants**

What do we want? *Equity!* (100%!) When do we want it? *Now!*

Hey hey (*hey hey!*)! Ho ho (*ho ho!*)! Racial bias has got to go!

Feel free to add your own:

## **Education Apartheid Day of Action – Processing the Day, Perpetuating the Movement**

### **Debrief Discussion**

*Find a partner on the bus, or as a car answer the following questions:*

- What was the most emotionally uplifting moment for you today, and why?
- What made you the most angry or indignant, and why?
- What was an unforgettable quote you'll keep repeating, and why did it impact you?

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## Quotes to Consider

“To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of (people).” –Ella Wheeler Wilcox  
- *What specific actions will you take to avoid “sinning by silence”?*

“The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you'll get action.” – Malcolm X  
- *Who do you know in your circle that’s asleep to the issue of racial bias in school funding? How will you wake them up?*

“When principles that run against your deepest convictions begin to win the day, then battle is your calling, and peace has become sin; you must, at the price of dearest peace, lay your convictions bare before friend and enemy, with all the fire of your faith.” - Abraham Kuyper  
- *How can you draw on “the fire of your faith” to fight for educational equity?*

## What Next?

### **1. GET INFORMED about education apartheid:**

David Mosenkis’s 10-minute YouTube video, “Racial Bias in PA School Funding”  
Education Law Center – “Money Matters in Education Justice”

### **2. GET INVOLVED, and bring others:** see our POWER calendar - [powerinterfaith.org/calendar](http://powerinterfaith.org/calendar)

Philly Education Strategy Team:

POWER Metro Education Strategy Team: Will Fuller, [wfuller@powerphiladelphia.org](mailto:wfuller@powerphiladelphia.org)

Statewide Education Strategy Team:

### **3. CONNECT with a POWER organizer:** [powerinterfaith.org/who/staff](http://powerinterfaith.org/who/staff)

### **4. BE A WITNESS:**

- Ask for time during announcements to speak about your experience with the congregation.
- Speak with your clergy member.
- Talk with your friends face-to-face or on social media.

### **5. CONTACT your elected official:**

- Call their office
- Email them David’s video
- Tag her/him on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag #educationapartheid. Ask them about their plans to end funding inequity.
- Schedule a visit to their home office to discuss the issue.

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