

EDUCATION
EQUALITY
PROJECT

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EDUCATION EQUALITY PROJECT STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

EDUCATION EQUALITY PROJECT STRONGLY ENDORSES PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

NEW YORK, July 29, 2010 - The Education Equality Project (EEP), a leader in the civil rights movement to eliminate the racial and ethnic achievement gap in public education, strongly supports President Obama's commitment to reforming our nation's public school system. We are heartened by both President Obama's and Secretary Duncan's strong words and actions on behalf of our nation's kids, and particularly by the forceful speeches each made at the National Urban League's Centennial Conference this week.

President Obama challenged the status quo in public education, calling it "morally inexcusable, economically indefensible," and saying "all of us are going to have to roll up our sleeves to change it." The President didn't mask the crisis in public education in vagaries or euphemisms. He said: "Let me tell you, what's not working for black kids and Hispanic kids and Native American kids across this country is the status quo. That's what's not working. What's not working is what we've been doing for decades now." He could not be more correct.

The education reform agenda led by President Obama and Secretary Duncan has put closing the achievement gap at its very center. By creating and implementing a smart set of policies and incentives, we are finally seeing real change across our country. States are re-examining the way they deliver education and adopting bold new approaches to meet the President's goal of ensuring that every student has a great teacher and an opportunity to attend a high-performing school, and that every student graduates ready for college or a career. This is the right agenda for our country and our kids, particularly kids of color and those from low-income families, who have most often been short-changed by our failing schools.

We cannot, however, afford to become complacent. A tremendous amount of hard work lies ahead if we are to make good on the President's goals. To reiterate EEP's principles, we must:

- **Ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom**, and an effective principal in every school, by paying educators as the professionals they are, by giving them the tools and training they need to succeed, and by making tough decisions about those who do not;
- **Empower parents** by giving them a meaningful voice in where and how their children are educated, including the option of public charter schools;
- **Create accountability** for educational success at every level – at the system and school level, for teachers and principals, and for central office administrators;
- Commit to making every decision about whom we employ, how money is spent, and where resources are deployed with a **single-minded focus: what will best serve our students**, regardless of how it affects other interests;
- Call on parents and students to **demand more from their schools**, but also to demand more from themselves;
- Have the strength in our convictions to **stand up to those political forces and interests who seek to preserve a failed system.**



“President Obama’s efforts to reform our failing public education system may ultimately be one of his most profound achievements. As a civil rights organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap, we strongly support the courageous stance taken by this Administration.” – Ellen Winn, Director, Education Equality Project.

About the Education Equality Project

The Education Equality Project (EEP) is a bipartisan advocacy organization that believes education reform is the most pressing civil rights issue of our generation. EEP is building a movement of elected officials, civil rights activists, educators, business and public policy leaders, parents, students, teachers, and concerned citizens dedicated to closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap in U.S. public education. Our mission is to close the education achievement gap for low-income and minority students in U.S. public schools and to increase academic opportunities and improve achievement for *all* students. For more information, go to www.edequality.org or <http://twitter.com/EdEquality>.

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