Roeper Board Anti-Racism Resolution

Preamble

In 1941, after being forced to flee their home in Germany, George and Annemarie Roeper moved to Michigan and founded The Roeper School. At a time when the Nazis were shattering democratic systems across Europe, the Roepers understood they could not be silent. As religious refugees from totalitarianism, the Roepers experienced firsthand the consuming power of hate, bigotry, and prejudice that forced them into exile. They established The Roeper School as a place where students could develop their voices and stand against authoritarian injustice, a place where human rights would be held in esteem, and where a commitment to humanism would shape the community that needed to be built.

For almost 80 years, The Roeper School has stood as an institution whose foundation is built on social justice, dignity, and the worth of every individual. Our history, philosophy, and mission call on us to speak with clarity and purpose when we see hatred and intolerance being given voice and strength. We know that we cannot be bystanders; we know that racism cannot stand unanswered; we know that there is work to be done to address the injustices of today and systemic wrongs that have remained in place for generations.

This resolution is not merely a statement of beliefs, but it also is a statement that holds us accountable to ourselves and to the community. Our children are watching, and we are called upon as an educational institution to model for them what it means to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community committed to justice. Today, we use our voice to stand as anti-racists, as allies, and as leaders committed to guiding future generations toward the interdependent community George and Annemarie called on us to build.

The Roeper School Board of Trustees Anti-Racism Resolution

The Roeper School Board of Trustees hereby consents to and approves the resolutions set forth below at a regular meeting of the Board on the 24th day of May, 2021.

WHEREAS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice are the foundation of the Roeper Philosophy;

WHEREAS the Roeper Philosophy and Core Tenets include a commitment to justice rather than power and to making equal human rights for all people a priority;

WHEREAS The Roeper School is committed to provide each student with a welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and culturally affirming environment for learning and success;

WHEREAS the ongoing social justice issues across our country, including the killings of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), have had a profound impact on our past and present students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and families at The Roeper School;
WHEREAS we choose to speak out in response to recent and historic national and local events that have called attention to racist attitudes, racist actions, societal race-based disparities, and other forms of systemic and institutional racism that have persisted for centuries;

WHEREAS we recognize our own position of privilege and acknowledge our own history of, whether conscious or unconscious, participation in systems in our community, that are built on oppression and include racist practices;

WHEREAS this unique historic moment in our country’s evolution presents an opportunity and a challenge for all of us to be part of creating a more just educational community for BIPOC students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and families within The Roeper School community;

WHEREAS we recognize that race is an important part of our identities, and we are responsible for nurturing anti-racist learning environments where all students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and families are respected and valued for who they are regardless of culture, race, or ethnicity; and

WHEREAS we believe that an accurate understanding of the past is necessary to build a successful vision of the future. We cannot value BIPOC lives without: (i) teaching their history, (ii) recognizing the contributions of BIPOC leaders, and (iii) celebrating the sacrifices and achievements they have made throughout the history of our School and of this country.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we believe Black lives matter.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we believe Indigenous lives matter.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we believe the lives of People of Color matter.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we condemn all forms of bullying, microaggressions, hate speech, and violence.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we condemn all forms of discrimination (unlawful or otherwise), systemic racism, and manifestations of expressions of racism, xenophobia, and ethnic or racial intolerance.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we resolutely stand, and will speak out, against all hate, bias, racism, and crimes of violence, and will commit to actively work toward becoming an anti-racist institution and toward dismantling the systems that promote racism.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we expect the School’s partners, contracted businesses, and other vendors to support inclusive practices and work to eradicate racist behaviors, and we expect the School to make decisions around who they do business with to reflect such commitments.
RESOLVED FURTHER that we will adopt policies regarding the creation and performance of curriculum review processes to ensure that our curriculum incorporates historically accurate portrayals and perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we will foster an anti-racist culture and take significant steps to further racial equity within our school, departments, and buildings.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to regularly examine the School’s policies and practices to remove obstacles and barriers that may contribute to systemic inequities.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to increase the accessibility of a Roeper education for traditionally marginalized groups, including specifically BIPOC students.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to ensure that each student is valued, supported, and academically challenged by the School regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we expect and will support ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and trustees that focus on combating systemic and institutional racism and further develop the attitudes, skills, and beliefs that are necessary to support all students and their families.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to foster a school environment that promotes respect for, and curiosity about, all cultures and affirms equal human rights for all our community members.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to ensure that student achievement will not fall into predictable patterns identified by race, ethnicity, or culture and commit to ensure that each student will have access to personalized learning opportunities that honor the student’s unique background to promote a sense of belonging.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we pledge to amplify diverse voices, listening to the concerns they share and the aspirations they bring, as we create and adjust our School governance practices and policies.

RESOLVED FURTHER that we commit to create a process that integrates equity into all decision-making, board policy review, and adoption processes, including an annual review of policies on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice.

This resolution was adopted by The Roeper School Board of Trustees on May 24th, 2021, by unanimous approval.