

**SEAL STANDS WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER**

The intertwined realities of a global pandemic and police violence have exposed the brutal and life-denying effects of systemic racism. The murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, among others, have galvanized our nation, indeed our world. Collectively, **we have had enough.**

At SEAL, we raise our voices against such atrocities. We also focus our energy, our resources, and our attention on the thousands of smaller atrocities that people of color—that *children* of color—experience each day on the streets, in stores, in federal and state halls of power, in prisons, and, yes, in schools.

We are an organization firmly rooted in educational equity. Twelve years ago, when the SEAL journey began within the Sobrato Family Foundation, there was an explicit choice made to centralize English Learners, because they suffered, and continue to suffer, gross inequity in educational outcomes. And although we have always promoted culturally and linguistically responsive education, our understanding of our responsibility has deepened.

Equity means focusing *first* on those who are most underserved, committing ourselves not only to inclusive, but to anti-racist schools, and classrooms. It is not an accident that communities of color are disproportionately affected by the novel coronavirus. It is not an accident that black men and women are dying at the hands of police. It is not an accident that over the last 40 years, the rise in school discipline and police in school is inextricably intertwined with the rise of mass incarceration.

We must do better. As an organization that cares passionately about the physical, emotional, and mental health of our children and communities, we take up an extra charge to be relentless in the face of oppression. **This is our promise to you.**

At SEAL, we pledge to:

1. Acknowledge that while we believe that education is the key to social change, as it stands, the educational system reproduces inequality and oppression more often than it disrupts this cycle.
2. Continuously reflect and reform by examining how we, with all of our structural, economic and institutional privilege, contribute to the problem of systemic racism, *even as we fight for social justice.*
3. Continue to seek wisdom through reflection and investing in social justice and anti-racism training for our staff to address inward and outward facing issues.
4. Explicitly address the concept of the "school to prison pipeline" and unjust discipline policies as part of our partnership in schools and districts.
5. Work with educators to examine curricula with a critical lens toward prioritizing culturally responsive/sustaining instruction as a supplement to Standards that implicitly promote white supremacy.
6. Provide teachers, starting in Preschool, with tools to explicitly talk with students about racial, linguistic, and other social injustices that focus on empowerment and making change, moving beyond inclusivity to anti-racism.
7. Help educators reflect upon who speaks and does not speak or is silenced in their classrooms to critically examine unconscious bias in their expectations, especially for children of color, English Learners, and children with special needs.
8. Work with districts and county offices to critically examine and amplify the resources they provide for families, with a focus on meeting their practical, physical needs, as well as support around healing the wounds of poverty and racial trauma.
9. Provide guidance to schools about how to re-open with an intense focus prioritizing their neediest students.

SEAL mourns the lives we have lost. We cherish the lives left to us.
We promise to do better. **Black lives matter.**