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SCHOOL OF URBAN EDUCATION

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### Statement about These Historic Times and Our Commitment (June 9, 2020)

We, the School of Urban Education, are grieved and mortified by the horrendous murder committed by White police officer Derek Chauvin upon the body of Mr. George Floyd, a Black man who was accused of using a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill. It was just a few months after the brutal murder committed by two white men upon the body of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, a Black man who was jogging and White police officers' killing Breonna Taylor, a Black woman in Michigan who was sleeping in her bed. It was just a few years ago that Jamar Clark (2015) and Philando Castile (2016) were also killed by police in our communities. These murders and countless others which are often sanctioned by the state are deeply rooted in the White supremacist ideology that Black lives do not matter.

We whole heartedly reject White supremacy, anti-Black racism, and all systems and structures designed to keep White knees on Black necks. In our response to these egregious murders, we articulate a clarion call not just to resist oppression, but to rise up with withering critiques of oppressive systems; rise up with thundering rebukes of the constructs of whiteness that fuels White dominance, and, rise up with unapologetic love for Black lives.

Although police killings of Black people are seen as a criminal justice issue, we recognize the current uprising to be the consequence of a 400-year nightmare for Black people in America. This nightmare is manifested in every sector of society including the education systems. These systems are interconnected. The continued oppression, resilience and resistance of Black people also intersects with that of Indigenous, Latinx and Asian communities in our society.

The School of Urban Education stands ready to fully acknowledge and uproot any complicity we may have shown and that may have contributed to any oppressive systems. We are committed to the cause of racial justice and liberation education. Our goals and efforts are inextricably bound with other abolitionist educators who are working to address persistent opportunity gaps, and the massive education debt owed to Black, Indigenous and Brown communities. Together, we the administration, staff, faculty and students in the School of Urban Education will continue working to dismantle predictable racial disparities resulting in separate and unequal outcomes in PK-12 classrooms, post-secondary education and society. It is our aspiration to live by the words of James Baldwin who said, "*Those that say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it.*"

In the Constant Struggle,

The School of Urban Education  
Metropolitan State University