



WANT TO REDUCE RACISM IN SCHOOLS? LISTEN TO THESE STUDENTS.



The Californians for Justice campaign is called #DearRacismInSchool. The testimonies are powerful.

“#DearRacismInSchool,” writes Draquari from Fresno. “I notice when you speak through my teachers, causing them to have nonchalant attitudes toward my being. You make me feel like a monster because I hate you so much.”

Tajah from Long Beach writes, “I notice that when you’re in action you make me feel like I’m not gonna succeed in school because I am a young black girl from a lower economic class. Everyday you make me feel like I’m not as good as my white counterparts.”

The campaign’s message is defiant, not defeatist.

“I want you to know that you’re not going to be a barrier for me or other students of color anymore!” writes Tajah.

“#Racism, you must cease, and here I am to terminate you,” says Draquari.

In this [report](#), Californians for Justice, an NEPC partner, gets more specific. Based on youth-led action research, they developed a Relationship-Centered Schools campaign designed to encourage equity-based reforms. Their research included surveying 2,000 students and interviewing 65 education leaders as well as summarizing existing studies. As defined by Californians for Justice, relationship-centered schools combine social-emotional learning with academics, help all students reach their full potential, offer the capacity and working conditions necessary for staff to develop meaningful relationships with students, address trauma, build resilience, confront bias, and distribute leadership among students, parents, and staff.

Californians for Justice focuses on organizing marginalized communities, including students of color, immigrant students, students from low-income families, and LGBTQ youth. These students put forward three concrete steps that schools can take to become more equitable:

- **Value student voice:** Students should play a meaningful role in making important decisions about topics such as budgeting and hiring. Their lived experience is a valuable source of training and mentoring on topics such as implicit bias.
- **Invest in staff:** Provide staff with release time to support relationship-building reforms such as restorative justice and training on topics such as implicit bias and social-emotional learning. Hire and retain teachers of color.
- **Create space for relationship building:** Schedule relationship building into the school day via practices such as advisories, restorative practices, and orientation weeks. Infuse relationship building into the curriculum.

Find the full Californians for Justice report, *Why Race and Relationships Matter in California Schools*, [here](#).

NEPC Resources on Equity and Social Justice

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