



Our Voice ♦ Our Community ♦ Our Future

Dear Chairman Valadez and fellow Members of the Board of Supervisors;

We are writing on behalf of the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Education Commission (MEC) to urge you to vote in favor of the resolution declaring racial and ethnic health inequities and income inequality in Pima County to be a public health crisis.

The resolution cites factors of racial disparity in health that the American Public Health Association, and public health researchers and practitioners have long recognized, including racism, discrimination, and income inequality as fundamental causes of health inequities (e.g. Nairn, et al., 2006; Feagin & Bennefield, 2014). Further adding that systemic racism and poverty negatively impact the social factors that determine a person's health, including access to safe and affordable housing, active recreational opportunities, well-paying jobs, quality early childhood education, clean air and water, and health care and health insurance (e.g. Cobbinah & Lewis, 2018). These factors have also been identified by the American Psychological Association as having independent influences on educational outcomes for each student as well as career achievement throughout an individual's lifetime (APA, 2020).

As a network of educators, the MEC is committed to advocating for anti-racist education in schools throughout Pima County. For three decades, the MEC has supported policies and practices that will ensure equitable access to education and success for all students, regardless of racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or citizenship status. We support the resolution's call for actions that would expand Pima County's efforts to ensure equity for those underserved in our community. The MEC believes in advocating for future programs and projects that would improve the lives of these communities, and ultimately expand educational opportunities for continuing education as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and stability. Because of the aforementioned reasons, we strongly urge you to vote in favor of this resolution.

Respectfully,

Cathy Duarte Gastelum, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Metropolitan Education Commission

Respectfully,

Paul Lovelis
Chair
Metropolitan Education Commission

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References

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