

## Focusing on Racial Equity

### Position statement by the Investment Committee of the Mennonite Education Agency

June 2021

The nationwide activism to end police brutality towards Black Americans highlights both the egregious consequences of institutional racism and the economic disparities facing people of color in this country, injustices that stand in direct opposition to the Mennonite Confession of Faith.

“Through the work of the Holy Spirit, divisions between nations, races, classes and genders are being healed as persons from every human grouping are reconciled and united in the church,” says the Confession of Faith. And yet we are flawed people of our particular time and place. “The church is the assembly of those who voluntarily commit themselves to follow Christ in life and to be accountable to one another and to God, while recognizing that the church is imperfect and thus in constant need of repentance.”<sup>i</sup>

In the spirit of that accountability, the Investment Committee of the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) is engaged in the work of anti-racism within the scope of our mandate to manage the MEA investment pool, which provides an enduring source of support to the endowed and scholarship programs of many educational institutions within the Mennonite Church USA.

We believe that addressing racial equity in the workings and work of the MEA Investment Committee is both a moral and financial imperative. The moral obligation is born of our faith and in support of the mission of Mennonite education, where every student is empowered to be all that they were created to be. The financial implications of racism and wealth inequities are potentially wide-reaching, leading to a future in which disparities grow and social cohesion erodes.

This committee has long practiced socially responsible investing—investing and voting shareholder proxies in line with Mennonite faith and values, including peacebuilding, climate change mitigation, and fair labor practices. Socially responsible investing exercises our power to weigh in on the side of justice.

As the Investment Committee sharpens its focus on anti-racism, we are evaluating the Committee’s processes, as well as the partners we work with and the types of investments we make, through a lens of racial justice. We will report periodically on specific steps as they are discerned.

The MEA Investment Committee stands within and beside the Mennonite Church’s continuing “commitment to dismantling racism in all forms and to freeing the world from the grip of white supremacy, sexism, and hate. By God’s grace, we move toward this wholeness and peace with intention and resolve.”<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 9: The Church of Jesus. <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/who-are-mennonites/what-we-believe/confession-of-faith/the-church-of-jesus/>

<sup>ii</sup> Statement on increased violence and hate crimes against Asian American Pacific Islander people, by Mennonite Church USA Women in Leadership Steering Committee, March 23, 2021. <https://www.Mennoniteusa.org/menno-snapshots/aapi-statement/>