

A Resolution in Support of an Innovative Partnership Between Jefferson County Public Schools and Simmons College of Kentucky

WHEREAS, the history of Simmons College of Kentucky began more than a century and one-half ago, in 1865, when the Kentucky State Convention of Colored Baptist Churches proposed the establishment of Kentucky's first postsecondary educational institution for the Commonwealth's "Colored" citizens; and

WHEREAS, over the course of more than a century, Simmons College has provided postsecondary educational opportunities for African-American students and has offered significant cultural and economic benefits to the Louisville/Jefferson County community; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Dr. Kevin W. Cosby was selected as the 13th President of Simmons College, and under his leadership the institution has undergone a major resurgence, including the reacquisition of its original campus, the securing of accreditation as a baccalaureate and certificate granting institution, the expansion of course and degree offerings, and intentional community engagement to connect and provide traditionally underserved communities with the benefits of higher education; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, in recognition of its long history and bright future as a distinguished institution of higher education, the U.S. Department of Education named Simmons College of Kentucky as the 107th member of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); and

WHEREAS, as part of its long-term vision for the future, Simmons College is interested in working toward providing an undergraduate degree program in teacher education; and

WHEREAS, as part of its broader commitment to racial educational equity for the students and families it serves, Jefferson County Public Schools has established as a priority to increase the number of people of color, including African-Americans, who are employed by the district as certified teachers and administrators; and

WHEREAS, while 36 percent of JCPS students identify as African-American, and 56 percent are students of color, only 13 percent of JCPS teachers are African-American, and 16 percent are people of color; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2008 report, "The State of America's Black Colleges" from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, HBCUs graduate 50 percent of all African-American teachers with bachelor's degrees in the United States; and

WHEREAS, national data show that while people of color have entered the teaching profession at higher rates than whites over the last several decades, they have also left teaching at higher rates, particularly when they work in schools with few or no other certified colleagues of color; and

WHEREAS, over many years, applicant recruitment alone has not decreased the shortage of minority teachers; and

WHEREAS, the significant alignment between the long-term plans for Simmons College to prepare graduates to become teachers, and the desire for JCPS to increase the percentage of teachers and administrators of color in the district, creates a unique opportunity for an innovative partnership; and

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WHEREAS, both Simmons College and JCPS have dynamic leadership focused on transforming education to improve the lives of all whom they serve, thereby benefiting our city, state, nation, and the world;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The Jefferson County Board of Education declares that:

- The Board supports the pursuit of an innovative partnership between the District and Simmons College of Kentucky to significantly increase the number of well-prepared, highly qualified teachers who are hired and retained to meet the needs of all JCPS students, and expects thereby to significantly increase the availability of diverse teacher and administrator applicants for positions in the district.
- Such a partnership can be an important component of a multi-faceted strategy to increase the percentage of teachers and administrators of color employed by the District to meet the goals established in the District Racial Equity Plan.
- The partnership, forged through a common vision and intentional planning and implementation, can become a national model of innovative collaboration between a large urban school district and an institution of higher education, making Louisville/Jefferson County a national leader in improving elementary and secondary education, as well as postsecondary teacher preparation.
- As the partnership progresses, it is anticipated that memoranda of agreement will be executed to define the nature of the collaboration and partnership between the District and the education department of Simmons College of Kentucky, Inc. Similar collaborative agreements currently exist between the District and Bellarmine University and Murray State University.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have set our hands, and caused the seal of the Board of Education of Jefferson County, Kentucky, to be affixed on the 8th day of January, 2019. This resolution shall take effect upon its passage.

I, _____, Assistant Secretary to the Board, do hereby certify that the above is a true and accurate copy of the resolution adopted at the January 8, 2019, meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Education at which a quorum was present and voted.

Chairperson

Martin Pollio, Ed.D.
Superintendent