

**Quakers for Racial Equality statement supporting schools teaching about systemic racism  
(approved 7/14/21)**

Quakers for Racial Equality of Atlanta Friends Meeting stands with City Schools of Decatur, Atlanta Public Schools, Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights, Friends School of Atlanta, and the many other Georgia education and community groups supporting equity and respect for all students and honest discussions about racism and anti-racism.

The Georgia State Board of Education Resolution of June 3, 2021 statements of belief that “Georgia is not a racist state” and “The U.S. is not a racist country” misrepresent history and disregard the effects of racism experienced regularly by People of Color in school communities, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, and school board members. The State Board of Education’s admonitions to educators to not talk about race, diverse perspectives, or current events reduce students’ opportunities to practice critical thinking skills and impinge on free speech. For students to become engaged citizens who can help the country live up to its ideals of liberty and justice for all, students also need to learn about the systemic racism that is embedded in our history and institutions. Once we recognize that laws, policies, and practices developed over time have had racist effects, we can work to make them equitable for everyone.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believe that there is that of God in everyone. We support educating youth to value everyone’s common humanity and to have compassion for others. In keeping with Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, community, and integrity, Quakers for Racial Equality of Atlanta Friends Meeting are committed to addressing racism at the personal, institutional, and societal levels. That also means humbly facing the uncomfortable truth that predominantly white Quaker Meetings and Friends Schools in the U.S. have not fully lived up to our equality testimony. To address this, Quakers, especially those of European descent, need to examine all of our history, including those parts that don’t match up with our image of ourselves as being “among the good ones- not racist.”

Similarly, Americans throughout the U.S need to know our country’s whole history. Nobody is born racist. People learn these patterns through our culture, including through our schools. Georgians and others in the U.S. can move toward equity by educators having the difficult conversations about race, teaching about the complete history of our nation, and valuing all children’s identities and abilities to work for a more just society. Doing this learning and truth-telling in a compassionate, respectful manner can help with the healing of our nation.