

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: AUGUST 21, 2017

THE BLACK CAUCUS OF NCTE AND CCCC DENOUNCES RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Within the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the Black Caucus has worked tirelessly with other caucuses and social justice-minded scholars and educators to develop resolutions, policies, statements, and task forces to advance the cause of the vulnerable, while centering liberatory and anti-racist teaching practices for all students, particularly Black and Brown students. Given the tragedies in Charlottesville, VA and the U.S. President's seeming affirmation of white supremacy in his most recent remarks surrounding Charlottesville, we can no longer be silent against the resurgent flames of racial bias burning fervently in this nation.

We cannot be silent because within the larger society white supremacist groups are being fed in our schools, universities, and homes. We cannot be silent as the U.S. President dines on a rhetoric of bigotry, insisting that there is fault on "both sides." This recalcitrance to the extraordinary ignorance of false equivalence is a disgrace to humanity, anti-intellectual, and boldly racist. Sadly, we know that too many Americans agree with him. We see the U.S. President's actions as both dangerous and anti-Black. As Black scholars and educators with Black families, it is our duty to resist this element in our society.

Thus, we stand in solidarity with all those who are fighting against the scourges of racism and white supremacy. We further and unequivocally condemn acts of racism—individual, systemic, symbolic, and ideological. We unconditionally condemn terrorist, Nazi, neo-Nazi, white supremacist, and anti-Semitic groups and all other allegiances organized around principles of hatred toward people on the basis of who they are. We reject arguments that defend racist monuments as an issue of free speech, understanding clearly that white supremacy has always surrounded Confederate statues and their Lost Cause myth. Thus, we stand firmly allied and in sympathy with martyrs such as Heather Heyer, Lt. H. Jay Cullen, and Trooper Berke M.M. Bates, as well as all those who were injured in Charlottesville, VA, last week.

As an advocacy organization committed to combating inequalities and injustices in everyday events, we continue to be outraged and disheartened that the actions of so many of our citizens resemble the systemic bias that persists against Black/Brown, Jewish, Muslim, queer, transgendered, poor, and dis/abled lives. Similar to other publicized events of hatred aimed at populations, groups, and individuals who strive to fight for the human rights of those maligned as citizens, vulnerable people in our country have nonetheless been vilified, demeaned, and brutalized for their voices and political views. We believe that through our reasoned work in English language arts and literacy education, together we can bring about change. The conversations will be uncomfortable, but we must never let comfort exist as the enemy of progress.

Since its founding in 1970, the continuing mission of the Black Caucus has been rooted in this promise of progress—that together we can make the world better by eradicating the moral evils that threaten each of us. Thus, as a way to enhance the professional welfare of language and literacy professionals of African descent who work on all levels from kindergarten through graduate school; who are also members of NCTE and CCCC; and who are committed to vulnerable students, the ideals of justice, and the intellectual, cultural, social, and political

substances of Black life including Black languages, textualities, and histories; we call on NCTE, CCCC, and their membership to take bold actions to affirm racial justice in our collective franchise and to denounce racism and white supremacy in all its manifestations both within and outside our organizations. Further, we request special sessions, reports, and studies from NCTE and CCCC that bring community members and community-based organizations into conversation with our efforts to help us better understand and address white supremacy and its impact on vulnerable lives.

The lives of the vulnerable depend upon our constant struggle to deinstitutionalize white supremacy in all forms pervasive within and outside all institutions in the United States and wherever vulnerable people are both within this nation and around the globe.

ABOUT THE NCTE/CCCC BLACK CAUCUS: The Black Caucus of NCTE/CCCC is an advocacy group of English language arts educators and scholars involved in the teaching and learning of communication skills. The Caucus promotes and supports positive images and meaningful status, i.e. involvement and key leadership roles, for Black professional English language arts educators in NCTE, CCCC, and the profession at large; Initiates and supports resolutions and position statements that result in a broader understanding of language, composition, and literature, maintains a network of Black educators whose interests include appropriate teaching methodologies and practices that foster success for Black teachers and students in language, composition, and literature.