



## School Integration in New Jersey

### Draft Work Plan

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*On May 17, after learning about the school segregation lawsuit, a group of civic, community and education leaders gathered to form a steering committee and develop an action and outreach plan to support a positive outcome to the court challenge. Building One New Jersey is providing support for this effort.*

*The committee agreed to organize gatherings in different parts of the state as “listening sessions”. The meetings will seek input on the remedy from local constituency groups and leaders including school board members, parents, teachers, students and administrators, local elected leaders, labor leaders local, Civil Rights leaders and faith leaders. The effort would emphasize **multiracial leadership**, among constituencies and in places we believe need to be included and have their voices heard.*

*We agreed that we would approve an initial set of “guiding principles” as a basis for the conversations and to be prepared to present relevant facts about each region and the districts as they relate to current levels of school segregation and potential outcomes of the litigation.*

*We will draw on our networks of Civil Rights, law and policy experts in New Jersey and nationally through Building One America as well as our own experienced constituency leaders and members of the state steering committee and regional organizing committees.*

#### **To do this we will:**

- 1. Develop a target list of districts that we believe need to be included and have an important role to play in a remedy.** Our emphasis will be on diverse or increasingly diverse middle class and working class communities.<sup>1</sup>
- 2. We will seek to expand the members of the state steering committee.** We will work to ensure geographical, racial, ethnic, gender balance, as well as representation of key constituencies and areas of expertise and experience.
- 3. We will secure a meeting with the Governor and/or appropriate members of the Murphy Administration and legislative leadership.** We will use this meeting to seek support and buy-in for this process.
- 4. We will divide up the state into sub regions that include clusters of targeted school districts.** This will be based on multiple criteria including legislative, housing regions<sup>2</sup>, and county and municipal boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Our list emphasizes and prioritizes the more fiscally strained and economically and racially diverse communities. These are mostly suburbs. This is not to exclude “non-diverse” communities (often cities and exurbs). All districts will be invited. It is more to ensure that diverse communities (often middle and working class suburbs) have a role and a voice. It is our belief that these communities have an important part to play in building multiracial, middle class support for a remedy that is both positive and broadly backed. The exclusion of these communities often leads to misunderstanding and polarization.

**5. We will identify and recruit key leaders in each of these regions and sub regions to:**

- Form an *organizing committee*
- Set a date for their regional listening event
- Begin to initiate a plan of action based on a template<sup>4</sup> we prepare and make available.

**6. Each regional gathering will be designed to solicit input and reactions to a set of recommendations.**

**Each regional gathering will seek to include:**

- School administrators
- Board members
- Parent and teacher organizations
- NJEA affiliate rank and file leadership
- Student organizations
- Clergy and faith leaders
- Civil Rights organizations
- Civic organizations
- Legislative and local elected leaders

**Each regional gathering will have a similar format:**

- Explain lawsuit
- Provide some analysis on segregation and diversity in districts
- Get feedback (panel of leaders and experts)
- Offer and explain principles
- Get buy-in (panel of leaders and experts)
- Next steps - invitation to join

**And should end with commitments to:**

- Continue and expand the conversation with the regional organizing committee
- Provide ongoing input and representation to the state steering committee

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<sup>2</sup> Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) regions.

<sup>3</sup> BONJ has a structure (Local District Councils) that will be used as a starting point for determining the sub regions.

<sup>4</sup> This template will provide a suggested approach to organizing the gatherings. It will include recommended steps for communication and recruitment as well as a suggested program template that can be tailored for each region and improved upon by the local leaders as they proceed.

- Send representatives to a statewide gathering in early spring with Governor and legislative leadership
  - Solicit reaction to the principles and input on remedy
  - Secure a commitment to principles of inclusion, sustainability and opportunity
7. **Organizing and Leadership Training** - Building One New Jersey will provide 4 day leadership training in November of 2018 and/or January of 2019 for up to 40 leaders at each training. These leaders will be recruited as potential organizers and/or steering committee members. Shorter trainings will be offered at the regional level throughout the process to build support and secure allies.
  8. **Fundraising** - This effort will require more significant financial support as it shifts to becoming an ongoing campaign with a need for organizational support. A structure for dues, membership fees, sponsorships and training fees will be developed and funds will be solicited from members, participants, allies and potential corporate and charitable donors as well as labor unions.
  9. **The Steering Committee will deliberate.** Toward the end of 2018, a significantly broader and more informed steering committee will consult with Civil Rights, education experts and political leaders to further narrow its recommendations for a remedy.

**Our primary criteria will be that a remedy has to:**

1. Have real potential to be transformative for students and communities
  2. Can be achieved legislatively and be broadly supported
  3. Be economically viable and politically sustainable.
10. **There will be a large, statewide gathering in early 2019.** This gathering will include the Governor, the Education Commissioner, and key legislative leadership. It will also include education and community leaders from across the state. The meeting will set seek to secure initial commitments from the governor and legislative leadership to support the group's recommendations. A joint legislative committee will be proposed to hold hearings on the topic.
  11. **Regional groups will re-gather.** Meetings will be organized throughout the state to build more support among community leaders and legislators for the recommendations.
  12. **Leaders will provide local and national expert testimony and witnesses for legislative hearings.**
  13. **Building One New Jersey and the Statewide Steering Committee** Continue to campaign. We will provide logistical and communication support and leadership training for what will now be a *public campaign* to powerfully address New Jersey's shameful structures of inequality in education.