

## **Reds in Ed Program:**

- 1.) Pay all educators a living wage
- 2.) Nurses, counselors, social workers and librarians in every school
- 3.) Limit class size
- 4.) Fully fund our schools
- 5.) Defend our unions
- 6.) End privatization of public education. Stop the corporate charter school takeover.
- 7.) Prioritize educating our students not standardized testing
- 8.) Cops out of schools
- 9.) Desegregate schools and hire teachers of color
- 10.) Cancel student loan debt.

### **1.) Pay all educators a living wage**

Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. In order to defend and build strong public schools, we demand that all educators are paid a living wage. In 2016, according to *Time*, the average teacher's starting salary was \$38,617—20 percent lower than other professions requiring a college degree. In the United States, 77% of K-12 teachers are women. Occupations that are dominated by women pay less on average than those with a higher proportion of men and are often considered less prestigious. Low wages hurt some educators harder than others--early childhood teachers, paraprofessionals and school support staff are struggling to survive on little more than minimum wage. When educators need to work a second or third job to make ends meet, students suffer. Every politician talks about valuing education, but the truth is our work is dramatically undervalued. **We must guarantee that all educators have collective bargaining rights, due process, receive fair wages, reliable benefits, and equitable working conditions, not more empty promises.**

### **2.) Nurses, counselors, social workers and librarians in every school**

The decades-long attack on public education has created a dangerous lack of student support services around the country. Nurses, counselors, social workers and librarians provide crucial services, but budget cuts have left them spread too thin, working in multiple school buildings, or taking on caseloads of hundreds or even thousands of children. Students experiencing poverty, health issues, homelessness, mental illness or even a moment of crisis are left with nowhere to go, and no one to help them. Students in understaffed schools lack the resources for college preparation and academic exploration that more affluent schools provide. Overburdened teachers and office staff cannot take on the work of trained professionals like nurses and librarians. **We must prioritize students' mental and physical health by making sure schools are adequately staffed with support professionals.**

### **3.) Limit class size**

Decades of research has shown the benefit of small class sizes for students and teachers. Smaller classes lead to lifelong improvements in academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students of all backgrounds. The positive effects of small classes are even more pronounced for low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners. Yet, the United States is experiencing historic shortfalls in providing the number of teachers required for our student population, lacking over 100,000 needed teachers. Every time school districts are under financial stress, class sizes grow. Schools need to do what works for our students. **Class size caps should be determined by best practices research, not bottom-line budgeting. Money should be spent to train teachers, and help children.**

### **4.) Fully fund our schools**

From preschool to higher education, underfunding punishes students. We must fight for full funding in all public schools, correct long-standing disparities in school funding and allocate resources to public schools based on need. A study conducted by the Education Law Center and the Rutgers Graduate School of Education revealed that on average, wealthy students receive double the education funding that poor students do. Per pupil funding varies dramatically by neighborhood, school district and state, and in many communities, school funding has never recovered from cuts enacted during the Great Recession beginning in 2008. Disparities in school funding reflect historic patterns of housing segregation and discrimination, and many communities experience “regressive funding,” meaning the highest-needs schools receive the least resources. Charter schools drain funds from community schools in high-poverty districts and exacerbate inequality. The United States is the richest country in the world, it spends more on its military than the next 9 countries combined, and yet students and teachers are forced to fight over crumbs. **We have more than enough resources to fully fund every public school in the US, to reduce class sizes, to adequately staff schools, and to provide support for every student, regardless of their zip code. We will fight to make full funding of public schools, instead of endless war a reality.**

### **5.) Defend teachers unions**

Labor organizing is crucial in our effort to build collective power and break the cycle of underfunding, low wages, and privatization of public schools. Union teachers have won greater access to fair pay, healthcare, sick time, and parental leave compared to their non-union peers. We have won smaller class sizes, more nurses and support staff, more equitable testing policies and more whole child supports.

At a time when 50% of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years, we need the organizational power of collective bargaining more than ever. Over the past few decades, teachers' unions have emerged as a preferred target of the anti-worker right. But we have survived repeated attempts to break our unions, and the successful teachers' strikes around the country proved that when we fight, we win. **We defend teachers unions and demand that our right to collective bargaining and due process be respected.**

#### **6.) End the Privatization of Education - Stop the Corporate & Charter Takeover**

The anti-public education reform movement initiated under the Reagan administration has tried everything, from school vouchers to charter schools, to privatizing public education. The charter school project has been shown to be a complete waste of funds that undermines access to quality education and only furthers the destruction of teachers unions. Corporations run charter schools using public monies, often taking the space of existing public schools, in order to profit their owners and stockholders. Most frequently, they are not accountable to the local community they are in, and are not required to be transparent with how they are spending public money. They are not interested in quality universal public education that serves the needs of all students. Public schools not corporate charter schools!

#### **7.) Prioritize educating our students not standardized testing**

Standardized testing is a key component of the neo-liberal "school reform" movement that is behind the attacks on public schools and teachers we've seen over the past several decades. Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind law in 2002, US students have experienced a dramatic increase in high-stakes testing, but [meta-analysis of student data reveals these tests have not produced lasting gains in academic achievement](#). The average American student now takes approximately 8 standardized tests a year, or 112 between kindergarten and 12th grade, and massive private investments have been made to reshape teacher evaluations to reflect students' scores. This outsized focus on standardized testing has been [linked](#) to negative social-emotional consequences for students, high teacher turnover, school closures, and a lack of instruction in untested subjects like civics, science, and the arts. Students and teachers are tired of being guinea pigs in the national experiment in high-stakes testing. **Students need supportive school environments, qualified educators, and resources to address their diverse needs, not standardized tests.**

#### **8.) Cops out of Schools**

In the last half a century public schools all over the U.S. have witnessed a massive influx of police officers into their schools. Funds are being wasted to further militarize

our schools. As general poverty deepens, police brutality continues unabated, and the prison state has grown in scope finding new ways to criminalize and incarcerate vulnerable people. Our schools should be safe havens for our students. They should be places where students learn and discover themselves, not where they are criminalized, profiled, and oppressed by police officers. Instead, the capitalist U.S. government invests more into criminal and juvenile justice systems. In every state “spending on corrections grew at a much higher rate than education spending over the past three decades.” According to data from 2015-2016, Black students made up 31% of students who were referred to law enforcement or arrested, despite only making up 15% of total student enrollment. **We demand cops out of our schools, an end to the militarization of our schools, and an end to the school to prison pipeline.**

### **9.) Desegregate Schools, hire teachers of color**

Sixty six years after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, schools across the U.S. are being re-segregated, and many were never even fully desegregated to start with. According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics “In fall 2016, the percentage of students who attended high-poverty schools was highest for Hispanic students (45 percent), followed by Black students (44 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native students (38 percent), Pacific Islander students (24 percent), students of Two or more races (17 percent), Asian students (14 percent), and White students (8 percent).” Our schools need to be desegregated. **The self-determination of oppressed communities of color must be valued and upheld. Access to high quality equal education should be a right to all students regardless of ethnic or racial background or national origin.**

Teachers of color make up less than 20% of the teachers in the U.S. with only 2% of that being African American men, despite the fact that the majority of the students in public schools today are students of color. According to a Learning Policy Institute report, teachers of color have an immensely positive impact on students of color’s academic success and life outcomes. Some of the impact teachers of color have are higher graduation rates, lower drop-out and suspension rates, and more interest in pursuing higher education. White students also benefit by becoming more likely to talk about bias and racism in their classrooms and dismantle racist ideology. However, due to lack of support and adequate compensation for their labor, teachers of color are more transient in the profession. **We demand a massive affirmative action program in training, hiring, and supporting, and retaining teachers of color.**

### **10.) Cancel Student Debt**

According to a 2019 NPR report, people in the U.S. “carry \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt.” Which is “twice the current budget for the Defense Department and around 22 times the budget for the Education Department.” Furthermore, “about one in every six American adults owes money on a federal student loan.” Under capitalism education is a commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. As the neoliberal march continues on, paving the way to more precarity and insecurity millions of people, many of them young people, are thrown into massive amounts of student debt for seeking higher education. **We demand a cancelling of all student debt and the implementation of free public education through university.**