January 25, 2021

Dear Commissioner Rosa:

We are writing to request your immediate attention to the system of 21st Century Jim Crow education in the East Ramapo Central School District (ERCSD). As under Jim Crow, ERCSD is run by a white majority which uses its control of the district to benefit white students in segregated private schools at the expense of Black and Latinx students in the public schools. It is unconscionable that this is allowed to persist in New York in 2021. Despite the fact that the Commissioner of Education is granted tremendous regulatory and administrative oversight powers under the New York State Constitution, past Commissioners have taken no decisive action to intervene in ERCSD to address the systemic racism that dominates our schools. You have the opportunity to improve this situation for our students.

We are requesting a meeting with you at the earliest available date to address the concerns raised in the December 7, 2020 letter from the Spring Valley Branch of the NAACP as well as other important matters regarding ERCSD.

Of the nearly 9,000 students in ERCSD public schools, 92% are Black or Latinx, 37% are English language learners, and 89% are economically disadvantaged. These students have been systematically denied their right to an education. East Ramapo graduation rates are 62 percent in a county that averages 92 percent. There is not one single social worker to support students. From March to November of this year, 5,000 students were effectively denied access to any education whatsoever because the district failed to provide the equipment necessary for participation in remote learning. These examples are but the tip of the iceberg.

Your predecessors appointed monitors to provide oversight and accountability to ERCSD. But rather than serving as truly independent monitors, it appears that they are treating the district as a consulting client for whom they are providing technical assistance. And they give positive reports about ERCSD to the Board of Regents, which sweep the reality of 21st Century Jim Crow education under the rug.

There are mountains of public evidence that civil rights violations are ongoing in this district. Most recently, in May 2020, the US District Court for the Southern District of New York found ERCSD responsible for unlawfully manipulating the political process in order to maintain control of the school board, in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The judge found that this control is used to privilege white, private school students and has a “discriminatory effect” on students of color. Additionally, in 2015, the Office of Civil Rights of the US Department of Education identified racially segregated special education and bilingual education programs in the district. OCR found “no evidence” based on “recognized educational theory” to justify this segregation. This case is still open. But the State Education Department has done nothing about these fundamental civil rights violations.
The NYS Comptroller audited ERCSD in 2019 and found that one-third of private school students receiving publicly financed transportation lacked the proper proof of eligibility. At the same time, the monitors reported that the district was taking the necessary steps to “ensure accuracy” in transportation determinations, not only taking the representations of the district at face value, but lending credibility to them. Under your predecessors we have seen nothing done to hold ERCSD accountable for the findings of the Comptroller.

Empowering the monitors to fulfill their responsibilities to the students of color in ERCSD would be but a first step towards addressing the pattern of systemic racism in the district. The situation is urgent and is beyond the power of the monitors to address alone. For example, when the monitors attempted to intervene in the school board’s decision to make public school spaces available for private summer camps during the pandemic, the board essentially ignored them. Your personal involvement in this issue will ensure the monitors can and do take effective positions against the school board. It is essential that NYSED plays a robust role in the oversight of ERCSD. You have the opportunity to send a message that what is happening in East Ramapo is not only a local issue, but has state and national civil rights implications.

Please contact Willie Trotman, President, Spring Valley Branch, NAACP at (845) 536-4845 to arrange a meeting with a representative delegation of our coalition.

Sincerely,

Willie J. Trotman
President, Spring Valley Branch
NAACP

Wilbur T. Aldridge
Mid-Hudson Regional Director
NAACP

Dr. Hazel N. Dukes
President, NYS Conference
NAACP

Donna Lieberman
Executive Director
NYCLU

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo
Speaker Carl Heastie
Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
U.S. Representative Mondaire Jones
Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick
Senator James Skoufis
Assembly Member Kenneth Zebrowski
Assembly Member Michael Lawler
Members of the Board of Regents
Organizational Sign-Ons

African American Historical Society of Rockland County  
AFT  
All Children Can Learn  
Asociación de Ecuatorianos en Spring Valley  
Alliance for Latino Empowerment  
Black Excellence Pipeline  
Centurion Inc  
Clergy for Justice/OJC  
Congregation Sons of Israel, Nyack  
CUPON  
CUPON - Hillcrest  
Earth Friend  
Haitian Leadership Forum (HLF)  
Harriet Tubman Sr Citizens Club  
Iqra Darul Ehsan  
Jerrahi Order of America  
JUNTOS LUCHAREMOS (LET’S FIGHT TOGETHER)  
NAACP  
NAACP Freeport Roosevelt Branch  
NAACP Peekskill  
NAACP Spring Valley  
Nanuet Hebrew Center  
Nyack Branch NAACP  
NYSUT  
Orangetown Jewish Center  
Peaceful Guardians Project  
Pi Psi Omega  
Power of Ten  
Preserve Ramapo  
Preserve Rockland  
Reform Temple of Rockland  
Rho Gamma Sigma chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.  
Rockland After School Programs  
Rockland Clergy for Social Justice  
Rockland County Action Committee Lohud, Inc.  
Rockland County Haiti Relief  
Rockland Immigration Coalition  
Rockland Interfaith Breakfast Program  
Rockland United  
St. Paul’s AME Zion Church  
SV NAACP/Rockland Zetas  
Tau Gamma Zeta Sorority  
The Public Science Project  
Triple Spiral of Dún na Sidhe  
Union de Padres ERSCD  
Vision International For N.E.E.D.E.D Children (VINC)  
Yaffed  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated

Individual Sign-Ons

Adrian Chimbo, Student  
Alisha Dumas, Student  
Allaha Mohiby, Student  
Allyson Daos, Student  
Amari Mcgregor, Student  
Ana Alarcon, Student  
Andrea Vasquez, Student  
Angel Cruz, Student  
Anika Khanam, Student  
Anjana Vimalakshan, Student  
Annie Dolan, Student  
Anthony Mack, Student  
Ariana Urs, Student  
Arianah Daye, Student  
Ashley Alarcon, Student  
Bailey Proctor, Student  
Benjamin Mejia, Student  
Berthinna Valsaint, Student  
Binnocentia Valsaint, Student  
Brianna Alarcon, Student  
Brianna Leiva - Flores, Student  
Britney Vildor, Student  
Bryan Lema, Student  
Carmella Dikitanan, Student  
Charlene A, Student  
Chelsy Louisthelmy, Student
Ahmed Noor Nagori, Parent  
Alene Jackson, Parent  
Alyson Perry, Parent  
Ana Giron, Parent  
Anita Motta, Parent  
Annie Wilson, Parent  
Asghar Baig, Parent  
Asher Siebert, Parent  
Barbara Smith, Parent  
Boris Smirnov, Parent  
Brenda Sue Gallione, Parent  
Burak Kiral, Parent  
C Goss, Parent  
Chris Castelluccio, Parent  
Christian Garcia, Parent  
Christine S, Parent  
Christine Theodore, Parent  
Cindy Sevier, Parent  
Claudio Lopez, Parent  
Clifford Trevil, Parent  
Cynthia Cohen, Parent  
Deana Nelson, Parent  
Denir Texeira, Parent  
Deon Stewart-Miles, Parent  
Derek Justin Long, Parent  
Deysi Giron, Parent  
Diahann D, Parent  
Donna Samuel, Parent  
Dorothy Miller, Parent  
Dr. Kalicha Cameron, Parent  
Dr. Sara Winikoff, Parent  
Eduardo Palma, Parent  
Eileen Nekrich, Parent  
Emily Caputo, Parent  
Eric Goodwin, Parent  
Esther Thevenot, Parent  
Eugene Fields, Parent  
Evelin Merida, Parent  
Evelyn Bautista-Miller, Parent  
Faisal S, Parent  
Fatima Morocho, Parent  
Francine Reines, Parent  
Frank Youngman Sv Car 2, Parent  
Glenn Goldberg, Parent  
Grace Wright, Parent  
Greg Logiodice, Parent  
Hilary Altman, Parent  
Ijaz Jan, Parent  
Irfan Afzal, Parent  
Jaclyn Porpiglia, Parent  
Jacqueline Baker, Parent  
James Destin, Parent  
James Ievoilella, Parent  
James Yusuf Quinn, Parent  
Jamilah Jean-Louis, Parent  
Janaki K, Parent  
Jasmine Spencer, Parent  
Jean Marc Roche, Parent  
Jenni Mancuso, Parent  
Jermaine Harrison, Parent  
Jill Rossiter, Parent  
Joanne Mallory, Parent  
Jody Fox, Parent  
Joseph Caraballo, Parent  
Julie Audi, Parent  
Juliet Asamoah, Parent  
Karen Hunt, Parent  
Karina Sisalema, Parent  
Karina Sisalema, Parent  
Kathy Tamay, Parent  
Kevin Reilly, Parent  
Kimberly Crespo, Parent  
Kristen Monahan, Parent  
Kristen Stevens, Parent  
Kusar Asghar, Parent  
Lashaun Walker, Parent  
Latica Thezan, Parent  
Laura Graves, Parent  
Leba Bodin, Parent  
Leslie Long, Parent  
Lily Chapin, Parent  
Loanne Kong, Parent  
Luckner Sydney, Parent  
Luis Nivelo, Parent  
Lydia Katz, Parent  
Mallory Johnson, Parent  
Marco Tenezaca, Parent  
Margaret Castelluccio, Parent  
Maria Eliza Dikitanan, Parent  
Marie Esther Jeanty-Rein, Parent  
Mark Griffith Jr, Parent  
Meagan Chauvot, Parent  
Melanie Malone, Parent  
Melissa Hess, Parent
Angela Godhwani
Angie Mendez
Anita Cunningham
Anita Sado
Anjali Thakkar
Anju Antony
Ann Hollinger
Ann Nordon
Ann Stahl
Anna Scheumann
Anne Carey-Colorado
Anne Desvarieux
Anne Jacobs
Anne Pinzow
Annette James
Anthony Allen
Anthony Brown
Anthony Rodriguez
Antinea Middleton
Antonio Campagna
April Biggs
April Kupferman
Ari L
Arthur Sanders
Ashley Curtis
Ashley Gladden
Ashley M.
Ashley Sierra
Ashton Coleman
Aslihan Turan
Aurora H
Azeem Farooki
Bahiyah Abdul Malik
Barb Dorman
Barbara Ayew
Barbara Domini
Barbara Hodosh
Barbara Martinez
Barbara Meyer
Barbara Paisley
Barbara Renold
Barbara Schoenberg
Barbara Turner
Barbara Wilen
Beberly Duque
Belyne Louis-Jacques
Bennett P
Bernard (Ben) McCullom
Bernard Allen
Bernard Klein
Bert Hughes
Betsy Chollet
Beverly Chang
Beverly Mitcham
Beverly Yarkon
Bill Irwin
Blanca Esquivel
Bonnie Chapin
Brenda Clarke
Brenda Eibsey
Brendan Bourisiquot
Brian Duval Saint
Brian Kates
Brian Mahon
Brian Mcfarland
Brian Studwell
Brian Walsh
Brianna Burns
Brianna Robinson
Bridget Gallione
Brigitte Bley-Swinston
Brittany Barrow
Brittany Benjamin
Brittany Rosenberg
Brooke Gallione
Bruce Pollack
Bryan Roessel
C Smith
C. Hunt
Calvin Demetrius
Cara Kupferman
Carida Ridore
Carissa Baquiran
Carl Brenner
Carl Jenkins
Carl Louis
Carla A
Carlos Granda
Carmel Rosenthal
Carmen Carabello
Carol Baker
Carol Baumann
Carol Glazer
Carol Jacobs
Deandra Lubin
Deanna Boris
Debbie Silberberg
Debbie Warburton
Deborah Krikun
Deborah Model
Deborah Rush
Deborah Santos
Deborah Stedge
Deborah Walker
Debra Roth
Demetria Greenidge
Denise Kronstadt
Denise Ranallo-Capuozzo
Denise Waithr
Diana Corbin
Diana Mathew
Diana Siegel
Diane Bennett
Diane Churchill
Diane Goldstein
Diane Halperin
Diane Schneider
Dianne Rice
Dijon Holness
Dolores Aldrich
Dominick Derobertis
Donald Wilen
Donna Anderson
Donna Drygas
Donna Rose
Donna Yannazzone
Doreen Cosenza
Doris Schleifer
Dorothy Jean Marie
Dorothy Li Calzi
Dorothy Miller
Dorothy Rogers
Dr. Aaron Kleinman
Dr. Amos Friedland
Dr. Anne Donnelly
Dr. Anya Taylor
Dr. Audrey Brutus
Dr. Barry Friedman
Dr. Benjamin Goldstein
Dr. Carolyn Breuer
Dr. Christina Pratt
Dr. David Katz
Dr. David Mednick
Dr. Dawud Gordon
Dr. Delia Marx
Dr. Denise Lowe
Dr. Desiree Clarke, Md
Dr. Diana Greenwald
Dr. Dimitri Laddis
Dr. Elizabeth Johnson
Dr. Faith Alexandre
Dr. Gail Golden
Dr. Gina Forchelli
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Dr. Howard Bernstein
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Dr. James Flax
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Dr. Robert Shochet
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Gilbert Gordon
Gilbert Spevack
Gina Colasacco
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Glen Rivera
Glenn Spiegelman
Gloria Burnett -Gubson
Goldie Bryant
Grace Colangelo
Grace O’sullivan
Grace Springer
Gracelyn Gebel
Gracie Gebel
Gretchen Heinel
Guy Dorsinville
Guzide Celestin
Gwen Parris
Hallie Coletta
Hannah Clarke
Hannah Gobetz
Hannah Reynolds
Hara Hartman
Harriet Turner
Harvey Sigal
Heather Alwine
Heather Federico
Heather Hecht
Heather Koubek
Helene Kornstein
Herbert Winter
Hermann Bellanton
Heyward Reed
Hilarie Blumenthal
Hilda Kogut
Holly Brown
Holly Corey
Homayra Ziad
Honey Dickson
Hope Wade
Howard Adamsky
Howard Matza
Hyder Inayat
Idette Earl
Idette Flemings~Earl
Iris Fialkoff
Iris Pellot
Isabel Espejo
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Itzel Inniss
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Jaclinn Tanney
Jacob Boris
Jacob Hendrickson
Jacqueline Camilo
Jacqueline Felber
Jacqueline Roberts
Jacquelyn Drechsler
Jaenna Louis
James Flynn
James Lorinz
James Repetti
James Supreme
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Jamila Samuel
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Jane Blankson
Jane Lemkin
Jane Osuna
Jane Page
Jane Rudnick
Janet Goldstein
Janet Grigsby
Janet Lantz
Janet Miller
Janice Butwell
Jason Cantave
Javin Forrester
Jay Rifkin
Jay Singer
Jd Zeik
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Jean Claude
Jean Fields
Jeanette Blauschild
Jeanine Gershenoff
Jeanne Weiner
Jeff Eftychiou
Lee Michalsky
Leighann Navarro
Leonard Greenberg
Leoncio Gomez
Leonel Sanchez
Leslie Burchell-Fox
Leslie Cooper
Leslie Solan
Lester Strong
Ligija Rociunas
Liisa Murray
Lillian Jimenez
Linda Common
Linda Desiderio
Linda Dloughy
Linda Epps
Linda Falcone
Linda Kagel
Linda Masia
Linda Pistolesi
Linda Zebrowski
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Lisa Fox
Lisa Kaess
Lisa Kubie
Lisa Leote
Lisa Mazariego
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Lisa Russo
Lisa Short
Lisa Watkins
Liselotte Fleming
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Maureen Benedict
Maureen Cohen
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Max Goldberg
Maxine Bartow
Maxine Skopov
Mayerline Louis-Juste
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Megan Gromel
Meghan Kelly
Meghan Zigler
Mehmet Yildiz
Melissa Bala
Melissa Denizard
Melissa Rosen
Melissa Simon
Melissa Swartz
Meredith Christensen-Jennings
Meryl Cohen
Meryl Hirsch
Michael Chambless
Michael Clemente
Michael Dowe
Michael Krutch
Michael Landsman
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Michael Schutzbank
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Michael Tanney
Michael Wiener
Michaela Mariquit
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Michele Finley
Michele Hamilton
Michele Jagoe
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Michele Slung
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Mike Ohanlon
Milca Durandisse
Mildred Poliakoff
Millicent Kreis
Mimi Hoffman
Mindy Zlotogura
Miriam Suchoff
Mitchell Liner
Mobeen Hashim
Molly Prouty
Monica Alexandra
Monica Church
Mordechai Friedlander
Morgan Strand
Murteza Hasan
Myrna Bass-Hargrove
Nadia Celestin
Naftuli Moster
Naketa Volcy
Nan Klein
Nana Adjei-Brenyah
Nanci Goldman
Nancy Canals
Nancy Drennen
Nancy Flynn
Nancy Newfield
Nancy Parkes
Nancy R
Nancy Scheff
Nancy Segarra
Nancy Steckler
Natalia Koller
Natalia Torres
Natalie Estrada
Natalie Joseph
Nathan Karsenty
Nathaniel Lawson
Sarah A.
Sarah Collins
Sarah Mcglinchey
Sarah Murphy
Sarah Oshea
Sarah Varghese
Sarah Nash
Saskia Viner
Schenley Vital
Scott Wiener
Sergio Spositto
Seth Schlanger
Sevin Yaraman
Shaquille Alexis
Shareen Loubeau
Sharon Aach
Sharon Bash
Sharon Hittman
Sharon Jones
Sharon Mcintyre
Sharon Pagliuca
Sharon Rappaport
Sharon Sanders
Shaun S
Shawn Thomas
Shawnté Pitts
Shelley Forde
Shelley Zavlek
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Sherry M Scott
Sherry Mcgill
Sheryl Palacio
Sheryl Santi
Shivani Parikh
Sidney Moskowitz
Simone Desvarieux
Simone Scheumann
Sneha Moncy
Sofia Langman
Soleil Weddington
Soofia Rahman Rahman
Sophia Carroll
Stacey Galler
Stacey M.
Stacy Eliezer
Stefanie Ferraro
Stefano Corbellini

Stefany Ovalles
Steffany Saraguro
Stephanie Gonzalez
Stephanie Morris
Stephanie Reiss
Stephen Mcintyre
Steve Gold
Steve Losier
Steve Ovadia
Steven Bernstein
Steven Chandler
Steven Hintzsche
Steven Lee
Steven Schmelkin
Steven White
Stuart Novick
Styve Saint
Sude Atilgan
Susan And Steven Danow
Susan Baitler
Susan Buffington
Susan C Montemorano
Susan Ecker
Susan Ekker
Susan Elan
Susan Emanuel
Susan Gordon
Susan Heineman
Susan Kafer
Susan Kirshner
Susan Klein
Susan Kronick
Susan Lipton
Susan Miller
Susan Orlando
Susan Pleet
Susan Robinson
Susan Saffar
Susan Silver
Susan Trestyn
Susan Wiener
Susanna Bozh
Susanna Willingham
Susie Melnick
Suzan Moss
Suzanne Campise
Suzanne Coletta
Suzanne Fishman
Suzanne Hollmann
Suzanne Kofinas
Suzette Rivera
Sybil Weingast
Tamara Tee
Tami Fernandez
Tammi Fox
Tammy Goss
Tammy Schwartz
Tania Hashim
Taniya Abraham
Tanya Yager
Tasniah Akter
Taylor Mandelbaum
Tendrina Alexandre
Terelle Julien
Teresa Barbanell
Teri Mersel
Terri Ludlow
Terri Tillinghast
Theresa D Pieszchata
Theresa Lasso
Theresa Lionetti
Thomas Blum
Thomas Breuer
Thomas Deprisco
Thomas Hessian
Thomas Landes
Tina Rose
Tisha J
Toby Perlmutter
Tomara Aldrich
Tonya Couch-Jenkins
Tracey Torres
Tracie Holder
Tracy Scheinkman
Triny Hertzberg
Una Diffley
Valerie Foster
Vanessa Greenberg
Vanessa Lapointe
Venita Whidbee-Jordan
Vick S-Aclu

Vicky Forster
Victoria Gachette
Victoria Santiago
Victoria Stewart
Viki Steinberg
Vincent Frankrl
Virginia Caputo
Vital Desvarieux
Viveca Williams-Glover
Vivian Campbell
Vivian England
Vivian Street
Vondell Lee
Wendy Baker
Wendy Caesar
Wendy Cowen-Smith
Wendy Fleischman
Wendy Spelman
Widley Cesar
Wiky Toussaint
William Day
William Hochhausen
Yak Saturen
Yazmin Nunez
Yona Geffen
Yvonne Denise Rolle-Watts
Yvonne Scully
Z Omer
Zach Gobetz
Zena Schulman
Zuleima Perez-Soto
Zulma Montalvo
Zuzu Tadeushuk