

MEDIA ADVISORY

May 7, 2014

ALLIANCE TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS

Contact: Jhatayn Travis, Phone: (773)301-7827 Email jhatayn@yahoo.com

Contact: Julia Daniel, Phone (786)253-3538 Email juliadanieltruck@gmail.com

ALLIANCE TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS CALLS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

**STUDENTS, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS HOST PRESS CONFERENCE
AND RALLY AT U.S. SUPREME COURT TO HONOR THE 1954 *BROWN V.
BOARD* DECISION AND RENEW THE CALL FOR EQUITABLE EDUCATION**

Washington, DC- Students, parents and educators from across the nation are holding a press conference and rally on May 13th at the U.S. Supreme Court to reaffirm the promise of racial justice in public schools as declared in the Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools is a national community-labor alliance that represents over 7 million parents, students and educators who are standing up in the face of unprecedented attacks on their public schools, jobs and civil rights. Among those speaking at the press conference will be Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association, and Judith Browne Dianis, Co-Director of the Advancement Project.

For the last 20 years, a market-based approach to education reform has undermined the promise of equitable access to great schools for all students and pitted teachers and parents against each other. But that tide is changing as parents, students and educators are coming together to reclaim the promise of public education as the nation's gateway to a strong democracy and racial and economic justice.

The rally kicks off a national week of action organized by the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools to fight the dismantling and privatizing of public education and demand excellent, high quality public schools for all children. Grassroots organizers and community members across the country will join with leaders and members of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Educators Association and the Service Employees International Union. They are demanding full, fair funding and support for neighborhood-based community schools; a de-emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing; positive school discipline policies and an end to zero-tolerance; high quality, affordable education from early childhood through college for all, including undocumented students; and a living wage that lifts people out of poverty.

The rally will take place on the steps of the Supreme Court and will be led by parent and student advocates. They will highlight the fact that six decades after the

landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the nation's public schools are still separate and still unequal. The current, market-based approach to education reform has exacerbated racial and economic inequities in access to educational resources and opportunities. By focusing on the "achievement gap" the US has neglected to address the "opportunity gap" that disadvantages communities of color and low-income communities. To mark the 60th anniversary, the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools is calling for policymakers to recommit to the vision of equity and opportunity embodied in that U.S. Supreme Court decision.

At the rally, Alliance member organization Journey for Justice will release a report detailing the harm done to communities of color and low-income communities by corporate intervention policies such as mass school closings, charter expansion, over-testing and harsh discipline. The report calls for a moratorium on school closures and charter expansions and details recommendations for alternative, sustainable school transformation models.

After the rally participants will then march to the Department of Justice to call on U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to meet with parents, students and educators who are hurt by current education reform. The groups will file 3 Title VI civil rights complaints with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and with the Department of Justice detailing how students of color from Newark, NJ, Chicago, IL, and New Orleans, LA, are disproportionately impacted by school closures and charter expansions. The Alliance will also ask the Attorney General to improve charter oversight due to the excessive amount of charter fraud and the current weak system of oversight that costs taxpayers millions of dollars.

The Alliance previously mobilized for a National Day of Action on December 9, 2013 with rallies, protests, walkouts and other actions taking place in over 60 cities nationwide.

National organizations in the Alliance include Alliance for Educational Justice, American Federation of Teachers, Annenberg, Institute for School Reform, Center for Popular Democracy, Network, Journey for Justice Alliance, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Education Association, National Opportunity to Learn Campaign, Service Employees International Union.