



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Board of Supervisors Endorses Study of Impact of Segregated Schools and 1940 Forced Sale of Douglass School Property

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has voted in favor of studying the harm caused by Loudoun County's past discrimination against Black students and to seek out ways to rectify disparities. In addition, the Board approved a review of the forced sale of land to the county for a school to identify possible recommendations for addressing that injustice. The Board's action begins dialogues on the topics but does not indicate reparations or any other remedy. Instead, the Board will consider recommendations prepared by the Joint Board and School Board Committee in the future.

The [initiative](#) was introduced by Algonkian District Supervisor Juli E. Briskman following the September 2020 [letter of apology](#) for the operation of segregated schools, which was issued by the Loudoun County School Board and the Board of Supervisors.

"I said at the time that the letter was just a start of how the county can right these wrongs," said Supervisor Briskman. "I believe that racial disparities are not a result of individual failings but due to systemic racism over generations, which we now have an opportunity to address through this careful study of our history of discrimination of Black students in Loudoun County."

Board Chair Phyllis J. Randall introduced a specific initiative for the Joint Committee to study: a review of the forced sale of eight acres of property in 1940 by the County-Wide League, a group comprising the parent-teacher associations of all the Black schools in Loudoun County. The league raised funds to purchase land for a Black high school and had purchased property in Leesburg for \$4,000. In December 1940, that property was conveyed to Loudoun County for the nominal sum of \$1 for the purpose of building the Douglass High School. The Board requested the identification of possible recommendations for addressing the injustice contained in that property transaction.

"These initiatives will start an important community conversation," said Chair Randall. "Systematic racism has existed in Loudoun County, and we have a moral duty to acknowledge it and to examine how we as a Board and we as a greater community can appropriately respond to the injustices of our past."

The next steps include bringing these initiatives the Joint Board and School Board Committee, which will determine how to study these topics in the coming months and to develop recommendations responsive to the Board's request. The joint committee will return its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in the future for consideration. The Joint Board and School Board Committee is currently scheduled to meet next on November 1, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., at the Loudoun County Public Schools administration building. Documents prepared for the meeting will be posted in advance at loudoun.gov/bosdocuments.

- [View video of the Board of Supervisors' discussion and vote on the *Study and Reconciliation for the Operation of Segregated Schools in Loudoun County* initiative.](#)

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