

**Resolution Worksheet**  
**Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ**

**Title of Resolution:** A Resolution Supporting Public School Educators, Academic Freedom, and Equity Efforts in Schools

**Date Resolution Submitted:**

March 15, 2022

**Name of Submitting Body:**

United Church of Christ in New Brighton

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**Summary Statement of Intent of the Resolution:**

This resolution is intended to voice support of public-school educators at a time when academic freedoms are threatened. We wish to provide a response to efforts to control curriculum, ban books and media, and restrict equity efforts in schools. Further, we intend to raise awareness and provide members of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ with information that can be used for the development of talking points about these issues.

**Background and Supporting Statement:**

See attached.

**Resolution:**

See attached.

**Additional Resources:**

Education Minnesota. (2022, February 14). *Education Minnesota responds to GOP education plan with a better vision for parents, students and schools* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://educationminnesota.org/news/press-release/education-minnesota-responds-to-gop-education-plan-with-a-better-vision-for-parents-students-and-schools/>

Education Minnesota, Minnesota Administrators for Special Education, Minnesota Association of School Administrators, Minnesota Association of School Business Officials, Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association, Minnesota School Boards Association. (2021, September 13). *Public school leaders pledge to support and expand education equity programs intended*

*to make schools more safe, welcoming and effective for all students* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://mnmsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EquityJointStatement-9-13-2021.pdf>

Irvin, M. (2022, January 21). UMN Faculty Senate passes resolution to affirm academic freedom. *The Minnesota Daily*. Retrieved from <https://mndaily.com/270488/news/umn-faculty-senate-passes-resolution-to-affirm-academic-freedom/>

Kahlenberg, R. D. (2015, Summer). How due process protects teachers and students. *American Educator*. Retrieved from <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2015/kahlenberg>

Minnesota Senate Republican Caucus. (2022). *Minnesota Parents Bill of Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.mnsenaterepublicans.com/parents-bill-of-rights/>

Schwartz, S. & Pendharkar, E. (2022, February 2). Here's the long list of topics Republicans want banned from the classroom. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/heres-the-long-list-of-topics-republicans-want-banned-from-the-classroom/2022/02>

1 **A Resolution Supporting Public School Educators, Academic Freedom, and Equity Efforts**  
2 **in Schools**

3  
4 Whereas the United Church of Christ was founded by four denominations with education as a  
5 central aspect of our identities and has always been a firm advocate for education, founding  
6 many colleges and universities, including Harvard, Oberlin, Carleton, Doane, and many more,  
7 including many Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which grew from the hundreds of  
8 schools founded by the American Missionary Association after the Civil War; and

9  
10 Whereas the United Church of Christ has been committed to being an Open and Affirming, Anti-  
11 Racist, Environmental Justice, Just Peace denomination; and

12  
13 Whereas we in the United Church of Christ believe there is “ever more truth and light to be  
14 brought forward” from our scriptures, as well as from our world and our people; and

15  
16 Whereas the United Church of Christ has claimed to be a thinking church as well as a feeling and  
17 believing church; and

18  
19 Whereas we are committed to learning about the sins and legacies of slavery, segregation, Jim  
20 Crow laws, and other racist practices, all of which have contributed to ongoing disparities of  
21 resources and opportunities, and we do not fear the discomfort that is likely to accompany such  
22 learning; and

23  
24 Whereas we are committed to learning about and addressing the sins of violence and oppression  
25 experienced by LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, people of religious minorities,  
26 immigrants, refugees, Native American/Indigenous people, Black people, Latinix people, Asian  
27 people, and all others who have suffered oppression in this country; and

28  
29 Whereas we believe it is vital that every person, of every race, skin color, culture, religion,  
30 language status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, income, or family background is given an  
31 opportunity to learn about who they are and where they came from; and

32  
33 Whereas we believe that students are better equipped to reach their full potential as critical  
34 thinkers in school environments that continually strive for equity in all aspects of schooling,  
35 from academics and curriculum to extra-curricular activities and school culture; and

36  
37 Whereas we believe students benefit greatly from the study of literature and art that addresses the  
38 full range of being human; and

39  
40 Whereas we believe that proposals to ban discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in  
41 schools send a profoundly negative message of non-acceptance to students who are realizing that  
42 their romantic attraction does not conform to heteronormative assumptions, and to students who  
43 may be experiencing gender dysphoria or who have already realized that their real gender does  
44 not match that which was assigned at birth and by socialization; and

46 Whereas we believe that on-going thoughtful evaluation of teaching methodology and content is  
47 a necessary part of strengthening our public schools, but harassment of teachers, administrators,  
48 and school board members makes them and the students they serve pawns in a bigger struggle.  
49

50 **Therefore, be it resolved that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ at**  
51 **its 2022 Annual Meeting**

- 52 • affirms support of our public education systems and public school educators
- 53 • rejects efforts to ban books and media or to impose a political template over content and  
54 methodology
- 55 • affirms the need for on-going evaluation of educational practices that has the goal of  
56 better serving students and providing proper support for teachers
- 57 • affirms academic freedom for educators; teachers' rights to tenure and due process, and  
58 the right of educators to make decisions that are in the best interest of ALL students,  
59 consistent with research and best practices; and
- 60 • rejects efforts to inflame the public with hateful rhetoric against educators; censor what is  
61 taught in public school classrooms; censor books and media in school libraries; deny the  
62 histories of oppression experienced by marginalized groups; deny racism, sexism,  
63 heterosexism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice, bias, and hate;  
64 impose burdensome disclosure mandates related to classroom lessons, assignments, and  
65 activities.

66  
67 We ask Conference Minister and Associates, clergy, and lay members of United Church of  
68 Christ congregations in Minnesota to use this resolution for the development of speaking  
69 points in public arenas where such matters are being dealt with, including the Minnesota  
70 State Legislature, local school boards, Parent-Teacher Associations, Ministerial Associations,  
71 coffee shops, and the like.

72  
73 **Funding:** Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with  
74 the overall mandates of the affected entities and the funds available.

75  
76 **Implementation:** The Conference Minister, in consultation with appropriate ministries or  
77 other entities within the Minnesota Conference UCC will determine the implementing body.