

## ***Youth Editors' Note***

Dear *Perspectives on Urban Education* Readers,

The confluence of COVID-19, civic responses to racialized police brutality and violence against AAPIs (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) has had an enormous impact on each person in the United States and everyone around the world, altering the realities and dynamics of all facets of our daily lives and the society in which we live more broadly. Many youth feel that what we experience, what we think, feel, and need is not taken into serious consideration by educators, leaders, researchers, or policymakers. Moreover, the lack of public outlets for us to share and hear each others' stories of this impactful time in our lives with those who teach, lead, and work with us has widened the space between us, creating added room for misunderstanding when what youth need most right now is understanding.

Youth voices, experiences, and ideas are most often left out of discussions in education. This is especially true for youth from marginalized identities and communities. To address issues of equity in representation, we worked with principals and teachers from schools and districts across the country to get a diverse range of students to reflect on our experiences so that educators and researchers can learn from these experiences as this difficult school year comes to a close. The *Perspectives on Urban Education* End-of-Year Youth Voices Edition is a collection of youth essays, reflections, and poems that, individually and together, foreground and uplift the diverse voices of our generation at this time of unprecedented change and growth.

The reflections in Youth Voices express the individualized struggles and unique triumphs of youth during this stressful, confusing, and demanding time in our lives and in the world. We hope these reflections provide meaningful and useful insight into the layered thoughts, emotions, experiences, needs, and resources of today's youth as we conclude the 2021-2022 school year.

Thank you for reading our stories,

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