WHEREAS, most of our nation’s children depend on public schools for their education\(^1\); and

WHEREAS, previous General Assemblies have affirmed the value of public education\(^2\); and

WHEREAS, many in the ecumenical community are recently and currently concerned about the performance and reform of public schools\(^3\); and

WHEREAS, there is currently much discussion by policymakers and others about achievement gaps in public schools and how to close those gaps\(^4\); and

WHEREAS, there is a move today among policymakers (especially federal policymakers) to deal with these achievement gaps by closing struggling schools and substituting publicly funded charter schools that are managed by private boards\(^5\); and

WHEREAS, this approach leaves traditional neighborhood public schools to serve the majority of students with special needs, English language learners, children who are homeless, and children who do not fit the specific profiles of many charter schools and thus will not be accepted by them\(^6\); and

WHEREAS, a just system of public education is our best hope for addressing the needs of all our children\(^7\); and

WHEREAS, a just system of public education addresses the resource opportunity gaps underneath achievement gaps in our public schools,\(^8\) as well as the issues of race, class and geographical/residential location that affect these resource opportunity gaps\(^9\);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church meeting in Nashville, TN, July 9 – 13, 2011, affirms that education reform must be approached in a way that deals with the justice issues of race, class, special needs, and geographical/residential location in relation to the more equitable distribution of resource opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly urges all Disciples to engage actively in prayerful reflection, study, and public conversation about public education, including charter schools, through the lens of these justice concerns; and
FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly urges all Disciples to contact policy-makers and advocate for an approach to public education reform that is just and equitable, and that will continue to provide a quality education to all our children, regardless of race, class, special needs or geographical/residential location.

Family and Children’s Ministries of Disciples Home Missions

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT Business Item No. 1121. (Discussion time 12 minutes)


2 See, for example, resolutions 7155 and 8347.


8 Resource opportunities include such things as pre-school, experienced stable teaching staff, well-equipped science labs, broadband connectivity, computers that work, up to date textbooks, clean buildings in good repair, etc.