

EYE ON THE NEWS

Subversive Education

North Carolina's largest school district launches a campaign against "whiteness in educational spaces."

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Last year, the Wake County Public School System, which serves the greater Raleigh, North Carolina area, held an equity-themed teachers' conference with sessions on "whiteness," "microaggressions," "racial mapping," and "disrupting texts," encouraging educators to form "equity teams" in schools and push the new party line: "antiracism."

The February 2020 conference, attended by more than 200 North Carolina public school teachers, began with a "land acknowledgement," a ritual recognition suggesting that white North Carolinians are colonizers on stolen Native American land. Next, the superintendent of Wake County Public Schools, Cathy Moore, introduced the day's program and shuffled teachers to breakout sessions across eight rooms. Freelance reporter A.P. Dillon [obtained](#) the documents from the sessions through a public records request and provided them to *City Journal*.

At the first session, "Whiteness in Ed Spaces," school administrators provided two handouts on the "norms of whiteness." These documents claimed that "(white) cultural values" include "denial," "fear," "blame," "control," "punishment," "scarcity," and "one-dimensional thinking." According to notes from the session, the teachers argued that "whiteness perpetuates the system" of injustice and that the district's "whitewashed curriculum" was "doing real harm to our students and educators." The group encouraged white teachers to "challenge the dominant ideology" of whiteness and "disrupt" white culture in the classroom through a series of "transformational interventions."

Parents, according to the teachers, should be considered an impediment to social justice. When one teacher asked, "How do you deal with parent pushback?" the answer was clear: ignore parental concerns and push the ideology of antiracism directly to students. "You can't let parents

deter you from the work,” the teachers said. “White parents’ children are benefiting from the system” of whiteness and are “not learning at home about diversity (LGBTQ, race, etc.)” Therefore, teachers have an obligation to subvert parental wishes and beliefs. Any “pushback,” the teachers explained, is merely because white parents fear “that they are going to lose something” and find it “hard to let go of power [and] privilege.”

This isn’t an aberration. In fact, the district’s official Equity in Action plan encourages teachers to override parents in the pursuit of antiracism. “Equity leaders [should] have the confidence to take risks and make difficult decisions that are rooted in their values,” the document reads. “Even in the face of opposition, equity leaders can draw on a heartfelt conviction for what is best for students and families.” In other words, the school should displace the family as the ultimate arbiter of political morality.

The equity plan outlines this new ideology in chart format, announcing the district’s commitment to a series of fashionable pedagogies, including “color consciousness,” “white identity development,” “critical race theory,” “intersections of power and privilege,” and “anti-racist identity and action.”

The equity program in the Wake County Public School System is a massive enterprise. Founded in 2013, the district’s Office of Equity Affairs has now amassed a \$1 million annual budget and hosts an ongoing sequence of school trainings, curriculum-development sessions, and teacher events. In 2019, for example, the office hosted a series of “courageous conversations” about race and a five-night discussion program about the podcast *Seeing White*, which asks listeners to consider how “whiteness” contributes to “police shootings of unarmed African Americans,” “acts of domestic terrorism,” and “unending racial inequity in schools, housing, criminal justice, and hiring.”

According to Wake County Public Schools, the purpose of these programs is to achieve “equity,” which it defines as “eliminating the predictability of success and failure that correlates with any social or cultural factor.” This is naïve, at best. Cultural traits such as family environment, transmitted values, and study habits have an enormous influence on academic outcomes. The radical-left educators believe that this is an injustice. They see their job as leveling cultural differences, grouping students into the categories of inborn identity, and equalizing outcomes.

The administrators have the logic backwards. Rather than seek to level cultural factors, they should seek to uncover and then cultivate the cultural traits that lead to academic success across all racial groups. Despite all the recent focus on racial issues in education, the greater disparity in student outcomes today is, in fact, related to social class. As Stanford’s Sean Reardon has [shown](#),

the class gap in academic achievement is now twice as large as the race gap—precisely the opposite of what it was 50 years ago.

This news should suggest an opportunity to school administrators. They could pursue pedagogical strategies that help struggling students of all racial backgrounds. Sadly, rather than seizing this opportunity, teachers in Wake County are busy planning conference presentations on “toxic masculinity,” “microaggressions,” “trauma-informed yoga,” “peace circles,” and “applied critical race theory.” North Carolina might be a red state, but in its largest county, the school system has fully bought in to the latest progressive dogmas.

Parents across the U.S. should not assume that their local district is immune to these trends. The new political education is spreading everywhere.

Christopher F. Rufo is a contributing editor of City Journal and director of the Discovery Institute's Center on Wealth & Poverty. Sign up for his weekly newsletter and watch his new documentary, [America Lost](#), which tells the story of three “forgotten American cities.” This article is part of an ongoing series on critical race theory in American schools.

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