



Diversity Equity Inclusion

Personal Statement on CRT

(My personal perspectives are my own and not representative of the GCPS governance team.)

Excerpts from this statement without the content intended is false and misleading. It is meant to be read in its entirety without misrepresenting the purpose and meaning of this communication).

As a member of the Board of Education and current Board Chair of Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), I do not engage in the operations of curriculum nor do I teach at GCPS. CRT is not included in the GCPS curriculum nor do GCPS educators teach critical race theory (CRT). (For more detailed info. on CRT facts related to GCPS, please click on the following link: <https://www.gcpsk12.org/Page/32059>).

As a diversity, equity, and inclusion professional, I teach about implicit biases, systemic racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, misogyny, bigotry, micro-aggressions, and anti-Blackness. I am also an antiracist advocate dedicated to eradicating systemic injustices against humanity.

Anti-racism encompasses a range of ideas and political actions which are meant to counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and the oppression of specific racial groups. Anti-racism is usually structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions which are intended to provide equal opportunities for all people on both an individual and a systemic level. - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-racism>

Every life matters and when we see the experiences of certain groups of people whose humanity is constantly under attack, we must all take responsibility and do what we can to stop the inhumane treatment of anyone. This is best done by understanding that society is comprised of various people and cultures from around the world. Including such differences and knowledge makes us stronger and brings us together.

Diversity invites differences to the table. Equity ensures that everyone seated at the table has what they need to succeed. Inclusion means that everyone at the table may contribute and their differences are valued, respected, and engaged. Belonging is knowing that you are safe and fully accepted for who you are. True belonging exists in a space where there has been justice (healing and restoration) and where people are seen (past, present, and future) and celebrated.

We are all different and may not share the same values and ideologies. We may disagree, and it is not bad or wrong to not share the same perspectives. When we engage with one another in a safe and respectful manner, we can learn from one another and start the process of healing and evolving. We may be on different places on the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) spectrum and we will certainly make mistakes as we learn and grow. However, it is important to have a growth mindset and be committed to continuous improvement. It is also imperative to recognize that we all have biases and it behooves us to be conscious about these biases, prejudices, and stereotypes and how they impact people and contribute to systemic inequities.

Implicit/unconscious biases are unintentional and are most related to societal racism and stereotypes we have about a person or group of people. It is these unconscious biases that influence our actions and perpetuate structural racism. We must be consciously intentional about engaging differences in a safe, respectful, and brave space. My hope is for people to celebrate the diversity of who we all are as unique human beings.

People of color continue to experience erasure of our histories, suppression of our voices, and censorship of our realities. People of color and poor people continue to experience systemic injustices that prevent upward mobility. People who identify as LGBTQIAP2S+* endure discrimination. Jews and Muslims experience hateful targeting that threatens their very existence. Jews of color and Black women, like myself, experience hate due to our intersectionality.

Some Black people in America have a history of enslavement and generational trauma. Many have experienced racist laws, economic injustices, and bigoted policies. From Jim Crow laws and redlining to employment opportunities and inequitable education, people of color have experienced inequalities, inequities, and injustices. These are still pervasive today and a current reality for many in our society. We must all learn from history and do the interpersonal work to do and be better. We must work together to end racism and hate.

"I think that the roots of racism have always been economic, and I think people are desperate and scared. And when you're desperate and scared you scapegoat people. It exacerbates latent tendencies toward - well, toward racism or homophobia or anti-Semitism," - Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

As a multicultural educational leader, I advocate for the representation of all races, ethnicities, religions, and cultures. Every child, regardless of race, must know they are seen, heard, respected, valued, and celebrated. All children must learn historical facts and understand that their stories and lives matter. All children should experience the joy of their history and also recognize the multifaceted and complicated past. Learning about the past is critical to ensure a better, more equitable future for all people.

I am unapologetic about who I am as an artist, advocate, and author. I will also remain resolute and relentless in my fight for all children to truly experience belonging. I embrace differences and encourage safe and courageous spaces for diversity engagement. I hope this anti-CRT movement will serve as a catalyst to have respectful, brave, and difficult conversations that can help us understand one another. I encourage people to learn how we may all contribute to and perpetuate systemic racism and take actions to annihilate all forms of hate. I hope that people do not succumb to propaganda and be influenced by bigoted movements. As an advocate for the people, I believe in the power of the people and I hope the power of our diverse nation joins together and truly represents all of us. We must unite against hate and ensure the humanity of everyone.

References:

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