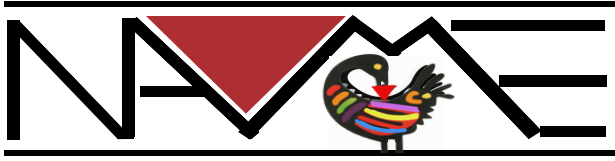


National Association for Multicultural Education



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NAME Statement on Culture War Attacks on DEI & CRT

[The National Association for Multicultural Education](#) (NAME) knows all too well that the confluence of four major events has conspired to complicate, confuse, censor and terrorize teachers just trying to do their jobs to educate students in America's classrooms.

First, there was the [May 25, 2020, killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, by Minneapolis police](#). People rightfully took to the streets to protest sustained anti-Black violence in cities across the United States and the world. This was yet another re-awakening to the [deadliness of anti-Black racism on Black life](#).

A second seismic change has been the shifting demographics of students enrolled in public schools. [The National Center for Education Statistics data](#) for the fall of 2021 show that of the 49.4 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States, 27.1 million were students of color, which eclipsed the 22.4 million students who were white. That trend continues with the [nation's population of color](#) currently exceeding 40 percent of the total — and growing so that in the next few years the United States will be a majority minoritized nation.

The third life-altering trend to hit America's schools, its teachers, students and parents in March 2020 was the [coronavirus, or COVID-19, global pandemic](#), forcing distance learning, isolating young people in their formative years, reducing college enrollment, exacerbating ongoing racial disparities, and negatively and profoundly affecting the way students, families, and educators think about and experience schooling.

The fourth major event — and likely the worst — is the coming [2024 U.S. presidential election in which mainly conservative Republican candidates](#) following Republican-led state legislatures and school boards are targeting their woefully ignorant understanding of [critical race theory](#) (CRT) and [diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in education](#) (DEI). GOP presidential candidate Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has attacked “woke” ideology as “a form of Marxism” and stated that Florida is where woke, or a growing awareness of historical systemic problems such as racism, sexism and homophobia, “goes to die.” In reality “woke” is geared to making society more equitable and righting the injustices of the past, but such [misrepresentations on justice movements are nothing new](#).

NAME knows that the culture war against CRT and DEI, and deeper, against the recognition of the humanity of communities of color, negatively affects the quality of education in schools throughout the country. Teachers and administrators from pre-kindergarten through college are being penalized for exposing students to the truth about again contentious subjects (including slavery, the suffrage movement, and the Stonewall Riots). That's in addition to bans and attempted bans on books that recognize race, gender and LGBTQ-plus people, communities, and movements. These bans include threats of federal and state funds being pulled from hard-fought multicultural education efforts.

Such coordinated racist, sexist, heterosexist attacks are designed to take the U.S. in a white supremacist direction. Intentional diversity, equity and inclusion strategies are required to transform the structures of white supremacist schools and colleges, and at minimum, as a way of including more people from historically oppressed groups into colleges and universities so that they can add their unique talents to governments, industries, communities and nonprofits. Woke ideology, CRT and DEI efforts are not about excluding, but instead recognizing that our shared humanity is essential to collective survival.

NAME's own symbol, the [Sankofa](#) bird from Ghana, means to go back and fetch, pointing to the great value of recording and learning our collective histories, so that we grow from oppressive educational roots towards the multiculturally affirming, integrated, lovingly democratic society that [bell hooks long argued for](#). NAME is committed to the work of cultivating a better future. We cannot go back to the way things have always been; we must all rise up against the current tide of white supremacy to defend multicultural education