

DEI and SEL

Hello. Thank you for having me. My name is Josiah Enyart. I am a parent of 3, 5, 7, and 11 years old. I also taught in the Shawnee Mission School District for over 10 years up until this school year.

I will attempt to prove Critical Race Theory is being taught in our schools and that it is hurting students academically and in their social emotional development. I will be using examples and experiences from the Deep Equity program by Corwin which is in the SMSD, and cost a lot of money.

Deep Equity was brought in as the program to advance the DEI, or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative to make SMSD more diversified, equitable, and inclusive. This program is based out of the foundational ideas that make up Critical Race Theory. There are 3 main points from CRT pushed by Deep Equity:

- 1) You are either the oppressor (white) or the oppressed (People of color), and whiteness needs to be eradicated.
- 2) All systems in America are rooted in racism and are still racist/sexist today. And
- 3) Equal outcomes is the only possible solution to ending racism/sexism, vs. equal opportunity, because any disparate outcome is a clear sign of racism/sexism.

Starting with diversity: Diversity is supposed to be different thoughts, opinions, ideas, and even appearances. The United States is the Melting Pot of the world, and the amount of diversity here is incredible and wonderful. However, that is not what diversity in DEI programs like Deep Equity by Corwin actually means. What DEI's version of diversity is more people of color, less white people.

It's proven in the Deep Equity program that is funded by the Shawnee Mission School District, and sadly, many others. It pushes guilt and shame on white students and staff members, while pushing victimhood and finger pointing for people of color. By focusing solely on race and gender, they omit the most important part; the ideas, thoughts and opinions.

For Social Emotional Learning, ideas, thoughts and opinions are the most important aspect. Students learn to see people and situations based on their ideas, words, and character. This allows for new perspectives and healthy relationships and dialogue to emerge. However, by funding a program that stifles white thoughts sighting "white privilege", as it does many times, or the demonized "whiteness", as it does many times, while pushing one sided ideologies of gender theory and critical race theory, they hinder and even disrupt the social emotional learning of students.

How can ALL students feel valued if they are told that they are only worth their skin color or gender identity? They are told by the program that they have implicit biases and need to rid themselves of whiteness. How can this be good for students, let alone society? How can people of color improve their self-belief and ability to persevere through challenges if they're taught that everyone is against them. It's a hopeless message and it's destroying student's self-esteem, social interactions, and ability to work on tough problems and learn new, challenging academic material.

Specific examples include the "Whiteness walk" that we had to endure at training, as well as the "Diversity Experience" activity in the program, and in the many Gary Howard videos helping people to rid themselves of whiteness. These conversations are all supposed to be filtered down to students from Kindergarten to 12th grade.

Equity is supposed to be fairness based on situation. Equality is supposed to be fairness no matter what the situation. The first image shared by the Deep Equity program is of 3 people at a baseball game watching from beyond the outfield fence. The white guy is tall and standing on 3 boxes, and can see the game clearly. The 2 people of color are shorter. The guy in the middle is on 1 box, and can barely see over the fence. The shortest guy doesn't have any boxes and can't see over the fence. Then for equity, the boxes are rearranged according to height, so that each person can see over the fence the same.

If two children came to you wanting food, one thin and clearly starving. The other healthy looking and obviously well-fed, who wouldn't give more food to the starving kid? The idea of equity makes sense, but that's not what the Deep Equity, or DEI programs intend.

The clear message is Marxist and Communistic. They want to hold back the straight white males and push forward the people of color and LGBTQ. This is clear in the attempts at white guilt and desires to lower expectations for all. They really don't want accountability, nor do they want to allow those who are prospering, if they're Asian or White, to continue to prosper. They do not take into account personal choice, work ethic, or strong character, because the CRT model says that any disparate outcomes are based on racism.

How does this help our students? Why are we funding this? We are paying to teach our kids that personal choice, work ethic, and strong character are not important and do not impact our futures as much as our race or gender. Equity, according to DEI means equal outcomes, not equal opportunity. That is an unsustainable and false belief that destroys ingenuity, pursuit of happiness, and equality. Martin Luther King Jr. and Jackie Robinson did not fight and give their lives for equal outcomes, but equal

opportunity. He, and every other logical person, knows that there is no way to avoid different outcomes due to the reasons that actually matter: personal choice, work ethic, and character.

Inclusion is not a new idea. The way Deep Equity and DEI programs push it is however. They do not just want everyone included. They want everyone who is in leadership positions that are not people of color to get out of the way. This is shown in the absorption of the MTSS program and stamping every serious behavior issue as a SPED department issue requiring an IEP.

By doing away with MTSS, everyone is now in one room doing 4 different things. The students all know who needs extra help because the paras and aides push-in to the classroom and specifically help them. It's less focused, less effective, and takes away the empowerment and meaning that MTSS provided the staff.

By making all students with behavior issues have IEPs, they claim students as impaired or incapable instead of finding healthy consistent ways to modify the behavior. This hurts the student in need, but also takes countless hours of learning time away from the other students. By making every behavior issue a SPED issue, they take away the accountability students need to learn appropriate ways to manage their emotions while subjecting every student to being neglected academically.

Prior to MTSS being dissolved, and behavior IEPs becoming the norm, our academic numbers were making steady improvement, even in the schools that had low income and high mobility. After MTSS was dissolved, and since the Deep Equity program was introduced, the academic numbers have steadily decreased.

There is a clear reason for this. The CRT influenced Deep Equity program is harmful to our students and schools. We should not be funding it, and those who do

need to do a better job at vetting programs before
spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on them.

Thank you for your time.