

From: Ashley Ellis
To: ~~Joan Sablone~~; ~~Ward Byard~~; ~~Scott Ziegler~~
Subject: Fwd: CRT and Gender Marker Questions
Date: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 6:29:38 PM

Let me know if you need more info. Feel free to text me for a quicker response.

Ashley F. Ellis, Ed.D
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Loudoun County Public Schools

From: Ashley Ellis
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 3:18:59 PM
To: Denise Corbo <Denise.Corbo@lcps.org>; Leslee King <Leslee.King@lcps.org>
Cc: Scott Ziegler <Scott.Ziegler@lcps.org>; Mark Smith <Mark.Smith@lcps.org>; Asia Jones <Asia.Jones@lcps.org>
Subject: RE: CRT and Gender Marker Questions

Good afternoon, Denise and Leslee,

I am providing this response to you both because you each sent an inquiry about the same video and slides that were sent by more than one constituent. This is a lot of information, and I hope it is helpful. I'm also blind copying the School Board on this message given the nature of both topics. Please let me know what additional information I can provide.

As we've stated in committee meetings and messages to the community, LCPS is not teaching CRT (Critical Race Theory), nor have our staff been trained in Critical Race Theory. The slides that have been sent to you from a couple of individuals come from a high school dual enrollment class. The video is an excerpt of a class discussion in a dual enrollment college level English course in which students were exposed to different literary theories as a way of critiquing different pieces of literature. CRT was an example of a theory that can be applied to literary criticism. Other theories such as structuralism, deconstructionism, and feminism were also shared. [Here](#) is a resource on literary theory and schools of criticism if you are interested. The slides are not a part of an LCPS training.

As Dr. Ziegler stated in his community message last week, in explaining LCPS' equity priorities, it might be helpful to state what they are not. They are not an effort to indoctrinate students and staff into a particular philosophy or theory. What they are is an effort to provide a welcoming, inclusive, affirming environment for all students.

The professional development offered to LCPS employees explores issues that have traditionally been ignored in professional development. It asks employees to examine their own personal biases and how they might affect student instruction and interactions with the community. Concepts such as white supremacy and systemic racism are discussed during professional development. LCPS has not adopted Critical Race Theory as a framework for staff to adhere to.

Information related to countywide training for equity was shared with the LCPS School board on September 22 ([Slide Deck](#)). Additionally, the Department of Instruction has created a [frequently asked question](#) document related to Equity and Culturally Responsive Instruction.

The acronym "CRT" might sometimes be confused with Culturally Responsive Teaching. As you know from C&I meetings this year, we do have a [Culturally Responsive Framework](#), that was developed this past year and is being utilized in our schools. Again, this is not Critical Race Theory.

Regarding the "\$400,000 in training" mentioned in a couple of the emails, that is likely a reference to the cost of the Equity Collaborative's support two years ago. Again, this was not CRT training - it was support with the systemic equity assessment and in finishing our work in getting all staff trained in Equity in the Center module 1.

I appreciate you asking for thoughts on how to respond to messages like the one you shared. Here is a possible response you could use if you want:

LCPS equity actions are not an effort to indoctrinate students and staff into a particular philosophy or theory. What they are is an effort to provide a welcoming, inclusive, affirming environment for all students.

The professional development offered to LCPS employees explores issues that have traditionally been ignored in professional development. It asks employees to examine their own personal biases and how they might affect student instruction and interactions with the community. Concepts such as white supremacy and systemic racism are discussed during professional development. LCPS has not adopted Critical Race Theory as a framework for staff to adhere to.

The acronym "CRT" might sometimes be confused with Culturally Responsive Teaching. As you know from C&I meetings this year, we do have a [Culturally Responsive Framework \(CRF\)](#) that was developed this past year and is being utilized in our schools. This framework speaks to providing a welcoming, affirming environment and developing cultural competence through culturally responsive instruction, deeper learning, equitable classroom practices and social-emotional needs for a focus on the whole child. Individual schools incorporate these best practices to meet the needs of their school community. This framework is in-line with emerging guidance from the Commonwealth of Virginia and [Virginia Department of Education](#). Again, this is not Critical Race Theory.

Regarding your second question about restroom use and the new gender marker for students, the selection of the "Non-Binary" gender marker does not enable a student to utilize a restroom or locker room that is different from that of their assigned sex at birth. The "Non-Binary" gender marker is a code that is now available within the Student Record to all students attending Virginia public schools. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is currently in the process of completing a Model Policy for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia's Public Schools. In accordance with Virginia Code, LCPS will work to develop a policy, based upon the VDOE model policy, for implementation next school year. Although such policy is not currently in place, LCPS Policy 1040 Equal Opportunity for Equitable, Safe and Inclusive Environment recognizes gender identity and gender expression. Additionally, each school has an administrative leadership team that includes school counselors, social workers, and psychologists, who stand ready to support families and students who may be transgender. Should a family have specific questions to support the needs of a student, they should contact the school principal or school counselor and they will be able to assist the family.

Again, please let me know what additional information I can provide.

Thank you,
Ashley

Ashley F. Ellis, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Loudoun County Public Schools

From: Denise Corbo <Denise.Corbo@lcps.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 8:55 AM
To: Ashley Ellis <Ashley.Ellis@lcps.org>; Scott Ziegler <Scott.Ziegler@lcps.org>; Mark Smith <Mark.Smith@lcps.org>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] CRT

Good morning,

I have received many emails accusing LCPS of teaching CRT with the attached photos. Do you know what they are referring to? Are these slides part of our training? One email mentioned we have paid \$400,000 for the training. Please let me know what this is, what training they are referring to and if we are using these slides as part of our training or not, and how to respond to emails like the one below.

Secondly, I've been asked about the new categories for enrolling students. The question I was asked is of a child is not identified as male or female, what restroom do they use and how does the identification play out with gender categories such as sports etc. Please help me understand the protocol and help me with a response to the questions regarding unidentified genders as well as CRT.

Thanks,

Denise