

PARENTS
DEFENDING
TRUTH

defending truth in education. toolkit.

How to use this toolkit:

This toolkit includes resources and information for you to engage yourself, parent groups, your broader community, Parent-Teacher associations, your School Administration, School Boards, City Council, and your Members of Congress.

Let's take it one step at a time and keep on stepping:

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Begin Your Journey

Learn the Truth.

"Once the mind is enlightened, it cannot again become dark" (Thomas Paine)

Welcome to the Journey:

We have all been raised in a racialized society. We hold certain conscious and unconscious beliefs shaped by every aspect of our world -- its systems and structures, laws and institutions, the master narrative and media. We do not know what we do not know, but if you're here, you're interested in knowing and doing better.

The journey may be lifelong, but the important thing is to begin. Understanding how and why racism is central to our nation's history emanates from many pathways and will provide opportunities for reflection that'll help inform your ability to defend truth in education for your children.

Begin by [getting informed](#), explore a quick summary of [key talking points](#) and/or just a few thought-starters below that will likely open the door to countless others [here](#) (or visit parentsdefendingtruth.org for additional resources).

Read

[What is Critical Race Theory and Why is it Under Attack](#) edweek.org

[A People's History of the United States](#), Howard Zinn

[Challenging the Master Narrative](#), The MacArthur Foundation

[Anti-CRT Bills State by State](#), Forbes

Listen

[Too Cruel for School](#), Pod Save America podcast

[Teaching Hard History](#), Learning for Justice podcast

[What's Behind the GOP's Critical Race Theory Rhetoric](#). npr/political podcast

[The Nation Podcast](#), The Attack on Critical Race Theory, thenation.com/podcast

Watch

[Answering Your Questions on Critical Race Theory](#). PBS News Hour

[Dr. Keith Stanley Brooks, Critical Race Theory Fact v. Feeling](#). EdTalks

[Schools, America & Race. Special Edition](#), 12/26/21. Meet the Press

Create Change in Your Community

Working Together

There is power in a community of like-minded individuals working towards creating a better world for themselves and for their children. There is momentum in truth.

Let's take it one step at a time, and keep on stepping.

1. [Get Started.](#)
2. [Get Organized.](#)
3. [Spread Awareness.](#)
4. [Schedule & Run On-going Parent Group Meetings.](#)
5. [Engage Your Community](#)
6. [Engage Your Children.](#)

Create Change in Your Community

Get Started:

- Find like-minded parents or community members in your world and begin to talk with them about working collectively to defend truth in education.
- Create a name for your group. You can use Defending_Truth at [local school/neighborhood/district] or anything that works! DM us @defending_truth on Instagram so we can follow you and add you to our database.
- Select a social media handle (eg. @defending_truth_[school name/neighborhood/district]) and establish your accounts across:
 - [Facebook Groups](#): Where multiple people can share/post
 - [Instagram](#): Help spread awareness and share what you're up to
 - [Twitter](#): Easily communicate with your community and lawmakers.
 - Please tag us [@defendtruths](#) so we can follow and share your work!
- Set up accounts across content platforms like [Medium](#), or [Patch](#), so you can easily publish content regularly.

Get Organized:

- Begin a master contact list, start with a list of like-minded parents (your core crew) or community members that you believe would be interested in defending truth in education. You can [use this spreadsheet template](#) (make a copy to enter your info!)
- Add other important stakeholders to your list: School Principal, School Administration, Important [community members](#), [School Board](#) members, your local [Members of Congress](#).
- Add important upcoming dates to your calendar (you can use the second tab ['calendar' on this spreadsheet template](#)):
 - The dates you plan to schedule social media posts
 - Propose dates of monthly get-togethers with parents to learn, strategize & take action!
 - PTA or School Parent Group meeting dates (on your school's website)
 - School Board Meeting dates (linked through your district's website)

Spread Awareness:

Most parents, raised within our current education system, are unaware of the need for truth in education. Help educate them as you are educating yourself, and learn together as a community! Create your own or share these informational social media campaigns:

- [Critical Race Theory](#).
- [The Master Narrative](#)

- [Glossary of Terms](#)
- [One-Pagers](#)
- [Essential Historical Truths](#)
- [What Haven't We Been Taught](#)

Schedule & Run On-going Parent Core Group meetings:

Once you have a group of interested parents on your list, schedule on-going meetings to learn more together and take 'manageable' action. Use the tools below to get going!

- [Key Talking Points](#)
- [Host a Virtual Meeting](#)
- [Social Media Invite Post](#) for your Facebook Group page
- [Email Invite Template](#) for Parent Outreach
- [Parent Member Google Survey](#)
- Parent Core Group [Meeting Agenda Thought-Starters](#)
- Parent Core Group [Meeting Conversation Starters](#)
- [Email/Letter Writing Templates](#)
 - [To School Administrators, PTA, School Board, Members of Congress](#), Local or National [Newsletter Editor, Media](#)

Engage your Community:

Once you have a group of interested parents on-board, you can share your voice with key stakeholders (business owners, restaurants, coffee shops, recreation centers) within your community:

- Canvassing or Community Event Materials:
 - [One-Pager: Awareness](#)
 - [One-Pager: Lead Generation](#) (to expand your core group!)
- [Signage](#) for community events
- [Car Magnets](#)

Engage Your Children:

Children begin to learn the truth about their world as soon as they begin interacting within it, but it is unfair to them to be taught a narrative that runs counter to what they feel and see in their world.

We, as parents, can and should engage them in conversations about the truth in education they may or may not be learning. We, as parents, can empower our children with the truth and the agency to change their world for the better.

- Parents Defending Truth [Discussion Guide for Children](#)
- [Definitions](#) You Might Need
- How to [support student-led social action](#) and change

Engage School Administration | PTA

Engage School Administration/PTA Associations

Let's take it one step at a time, and keep on stepping.

1. [Getting Started](#)
2. [Getting Organized](#)
3. [Engaging your School Administration](#)
4. [Engaging your PTA Association](#)

Get Started:

- Add all key school administrators to your contact list (You can [use this spreadsheet template](#) (please make a copy first so your info remains confidential!). You can find a list of your school's Staff, Administration, Faculty and more, on your school website.
- Add your school's PTA or other Parent Association leaders to your contact list. You can find your school's PTA Executive Board and Committee Chairs listed on your school's website.

Get Organized:

- Calendar upcoming PTA or Parent Association meetings & events (You can [use this spreadsheet template](#) – see second sheet (you'll need to make a copy first)
- You can find your school's PTA Meeting calendar on your school's website. Be sure to schedule your monthly parent group meeting one week prior to the PTA meeting to ensure coverage and prepare to share your voice(s)
- Save the Date: June 14-19 is the 2022 [National PTA Legislative Conference](#), you can zoom in!

Engage with School Administrators

- Just start a conversation. If you are friendly with your school's Administrators or your child's teacher, begin to ask them how they feel about the current controversy and about teaching truth in general. If you know a thing or two ([get informed](#)), it'll be a more interesting and productive conversation, but honestly, just bringing awareness to the topic is a great start.

- If your school has a Facebook Group page, posting the invite to your Parent group meetings and any of the 'awareness' building campaigns will engage your school administrators. If they don't, why not ask if you can [set up your school's Facebook Group page?](#)
- Feel free to join the conversation on [Parents Defending Truth Facebook Group page](#)
- Email or send a monthly letter to your Administration and core faculty, sharing your perspective and an example of a 'teaching truth lesson.' You can [begin with these email/letter templates.](#)
- Show up at your monthly PTA meetings, your Administration should be present, and speak your mind and ask questions! You can [begin with this scripted template.](#)

Engaging with Your School's PTA Association

- Easiest way to engage is to attend the monthly meetings and speak your truth. You can begin with this [scripted template](#), but as you continue to grow and learn about the collective truth of our nation's history, you'll find so much more to share every month.
- Brace yourself for the resistance. So many of us have been indoctrinated and it's more comfortable for most to resist a change of perspective. Keep moving forward. The truth will always be your strongest argument.

Take it to Your School Board

Take it to Your School Board

Let's take it one step at a time, and keep on stepping.

1. [What is a School Board and Why Do They Matter?](#)
2. [How Does a School Board Impact What Your Child Learns?](#)
3. [Why is Engaging Your School Board Important?](#)
4. [What Does Engaging Your School Board Look Like?](#)
5. [Sending a Letter/Email to My School Board](#)
6. [How to Find Your School Board Calendar and Key Dates](#)
7. [How to Speak up at a School Board Meeting](#)
8. [What to Say at a School Board Meeting](#)

What is a School Board and Why Do They Matter?

- Local School boards are an elected body of individuals that are at the heart of how education runs for communities across the US.
- Among other responsibilities (eg. hiring the District's Superintendent), they hold power to set policy as it relates to academic accountability, budgets and importantly, curriculum.
- There are more than 90K School Board members representing America's 55M+ K-12 students across 21K+ traditional and charter schools. They're a force.
- As with all elected officials, they're supposed to exercise oversight consistent with the values of their communities -- it's important to let them know what our values are because those opposed to truth in education are making their values clear.

How does a School Board Impact What Your Child Learns?

Your local school board has the power to provide oversight and approve the curriculum that your student is taught. And most individuals on School boards may have political agendas (just dig into their budgets, if interested). You can learn more about what side of the truth they live on by engaging proactively about the curriculum and educational goals of your Board.

Why is engaging your School Board important?

- Addressing anything related to educational curriculum *begins with* parents getting more involved with their local School Board.
- We need to balance the narrative in this arena: the opposition to truth in our schools is speaking out loud and proud to this influential group.

What does engaging my School Board look like?

- Write a letter/email to your School Board
- Attend your School Board monthly meetings (live or on zoom).
- Participate in public comment periods at these meetings. It'll help you get to know their position on the issue of truth in education.
- Submit questions or request for an open town hall to address issues.
- Nominate and Vote for candidates who believe in what you believe in.
- File a FOIA ([Freedom of Information Act](#)) request if you need access to dox.
- Run for a position on the Board, if you're so inclined!

How do I send an email or letter to my School Board?

Letters or emails to each member of your school board is an easy and consistent way to have your voice be heard. Learn where each Board member stands and tailor the letter accordingly, here are a few [email/letter templates for your School Board](#) to get you started!

How to Find your School Board Calendar and Key Dates

Your School Board calendar will be on their website. The link to your school board website can be found on your official school district website. Or you can just google [school district] school board.

How to Speak Up at a School Board Meeting

At every monthly meeting, the Board leaves room for 'public comment,' whereby individuals are invited to address the Board on any subject that falls within the District's purview. Each speaker is allowed a maximum of 3 minutes. There's usually a limit set on the number of 'public comment' speakers they allot time for (eg. 15). Here's how it works:

1. In order to speak at a School Board Meeting you need to either register in advance or sign up as you enter the room. During COVID-19, most Board meetings are on zoom so there'll be a sign up online.
2. At the School board website, you'll need to look for a link where you can sign up to speak/for public comment, eg. 'order of business,' 'citizen participation,' 'public comment.' Follow these links to register to speak at a 'regular board meeting.' There's usually a phone number to follow up if needed.
3. Some districts have a designated time when speaker registration opens and the slots can fill up quickly, so check in and set an alarm to get your slot!

What to Say at a School Board Meeting

The goal is to let your School Board know what you value as a parent with a child in their educational district. Just being there and speaking up is a win. Here's a few pointers:

- There's typically a time limit on how long you can speak (e.g. 3 minutes), find out beforehand and plan to speak to time (they will cut you off mid-sentence if you run over).
- Have a prepared script to speak from. If you go off-script, that's of course, ok, but better to be prepared and ensure you say what you came to say in the time allotted.
- Keep it simple and to the point. Introduce yourself. Let them know why you're speaking up, what you care about and why it matters to you. Here's a [sample script](#) to get you started.

Let Your Members of Congress In

Engage Your Members of Congress

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about"
(Margaret Wheatley)

Every two years, a new Congress takes office. Your congressman or congresswoman is elected to serve the people of a specific congressional district, among other duties, these Representatives introduce bills and resolutions, offer amendments and serve on committees. As it relates to legislation that changes all of our lives, their votes matter.

Their votes matter to us. Re-election matters to them. If our voices are consistent, focused, and together loud, they will take notice.

7 easy ways to engage with your State's member of Congress in minutes.

1. ***Find out who your Federal lawmakers are***, It's easy to be in touch with your elected officials – you can find your Representative [here](#) and your Senators [here](#).
2. ***Tweet at your MOC's or Senators on the issue***. Find their twitter handles [here](#). Sample PDT Tweets here. Having a group tweet within the same day on the same issue is a great way to amplify your voice -- hearing from only 10 constituents on an issue can be enough to affect some legislators' action.
3. ***Subscribe to your legislators' newsletter*** to stay current on their legislative activity and their positions on issues you care about. You can sign up for updates on their website.
4. ***Call your members of Congress and talk to them*** about the importance of defending truth in education. Congressional staff say that phone calls are one of the most effective ways to engage with them, and most offices have someone who actively tracks the issues they receive calls about. You can call either the Washington, D.C. or office in your home town – or both! Ask for the person who handles educational issues. If that person is unavailable, then talk to the staffer who answered the phone. Be sure that you have an ask or action you want the member to take in relation to defending truth in education. Use these [sample scripts](#) to get you started here.
5. ***Write a letter to your member of Congress*** so that you can describe in more detail the importance of defending truth in education. Address your letter directly to your legislator in the Washington, D.C. office. [Letter/Email Templates to Member of Congress](#) here to get you started.

6. ***Go to a town hall or coffee hour hosted by your member of Congress.*** These community gatherings will be listed on your MOC's website or noted in their email newsletters. Take advantage of these informal opportunities to meet your member of Congress, talk to them about truth in education, ask them about their position, and let them know you care. Sample scripts to help get you started here.
7. ***Write an op-ed or letter to the editor*** about the importance of defending truth in education for your local newspaper. Because they understand that they are there to represent their constituents, most legislators value news stories and op-eds in their local newspapers more than even national publications. By writing as a constituent to your local paper, you not only give your neighbors a chance to learn from them, you also access a powerful tool for bringing your legislator's attention to an issue. Here are some [tips](#) and [sample op-ed letters](#) to get you started.

Go to the Media

Engage the Media

This is a battle that is being fought and won in the court of public opinion, and conservative voices are louder than ours. The press is a great way to balance the narrative and ensure that both perspectives are heard.

Who to contact:

Follow the stories in your local or national news on this topic (google Critical Race Theory) and make a list of the reporters that are covering this story. It's important to reach out to media covering this issue from both sides so that your voice can be heard by all audiences.

How to pitch a story they'll want to publish:

Reporters receive hundreds of pitches and they'll gravitate toward a useful and engaging idea that they can get some traction or readership with. Here's a few suggestions:

- Choose a reporter that has written on the subject, address them by name
- Read their work and tie your idea to an article they've written and suggest how your story can build on their previous work (to show you've done homework)
- Keep it short, relevant to their work and to the point, communicating the who, what, when, where, and why in just a few sentences.
- Pitch a broader story (eg. defending truth in education) with a more personalized angle (eg. your child(ren) experience)
- Offer them an exclusive for the story
- Suggest a reasonable and convenient way for the two of you to follow up
- Use Twitter to communicate with a reporter (tag their handle)

Writing a Press Release:

A [press release](#) let's the media know about an upcoming event (e.g. a march, a rally, a school event, or a sit-in) and recaps what you want the reporter to write about. It's short (less than one page), sent out about a week before your event and followed up with a phone call a few days before. The release should include:

- Who is organizing the event and what makes them interesting
- What the event is
- When it is [date, time]
- Where [address]
- Why it's newsworthy and/or timely

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defending truth in education. templates.

Begin with thought-starter templates below for social media and outreach!

- Social Media Campaigns
 - [Critical Race Theory](#)
 - [The Master Narrative](#)
 - [Teacher Testimonial Campaign](#)
 - [Glossary of Terms](#)

- Templates for Parent Outreach:
 - [Key Talking Points](#)
 - [Social Media Invite](#)
 - [Email template](#)
 - [Sign Up Member Survey](#)
 - Parent [Meeting Agenda](#)
 - Parent Meeting [Conversation Starters](#)
 - [One-pagers](#)
 - [Community Outreach & Event Materials](#)

- [Email/Letter/Script Templates:](#)
 - To [School Administration](#)
 - To [School Board](#)
 - To [Members of Congress](#)
 - To [Local or National Newsletter Editor](#)
 - To [Media](#)

Key Talking Points for Defending Truth:

With the term 'Critical Race Theory' being used to agitate a conservative base and as a catch-all to broadly ban any teaching about race, gender or sexuality in schools, we must continue to balance the narrative with a unified message and our truths. Below are a few talking points that might help.

1. Our children deserve an honest, accurate and inclusive education about race and racism in this country. Attempts to censor these discussions in the classroom are attacks on a multi-racial democracy, justice, and community.
2. We value an honest education about race, gender and sexuality in this country and our children will be better prepared to solve problems and overcome today's challenges by having honest and courageous conversations about them
3. Students must learn the full picture of U.S. history, even if it doesn't live up to the values or democratic ideals our country was founded upon. The U.S. is both founded on ideals of liberty, freedom and equality, and has been built on slavery, exploitation, genocide, and exclusion. If we want our future to be different, we have to deal with the past openly and honestly.
4. Critical race theory asserts that it is essential to incorporate voices and stories that have historically been excluded from schools. Learning a more inclusive history helps our children understand the world they are living in, and answer the questions they have about that world.
5. Learning and growth involves moments of discomfort and bravery. If we teach our children to welcome and learn from those moments, not run away from them, they will be better equipped to navigate today's world, and thrive in the life they choose as adults.
6. We cannot allow public officials to filter public school curricula because they are not comfortable with the truth of this country's past and present or because they're not comfortable with what our children might do if they knew the truth.
7. The United States' diversity is a strength. Learning about diverse histories, races, and cultures helps students build connections across differences, and gives students mirrors that reflect their own identity as well as windows into the world to connect with others.
8. Culturally responsive education centers students' cultures, family, and communities in an academically rigorous learning environment. Students excel in school when they see themselves reflected in the classroom and have strong relationships with their teachers, and when we show students they have the vision and power to change the world.

Social Media Invite Post:

Suggested caption copy:

The news about Critical Race Theory isn't hard to miss, but easy to misunderstand. Join us [date, time & zoom link or location] as we work to better understand how to defend truth in education for our children together. #defendingtruth #parentsdefendingtruth

Download assets [here](#)

Email Invite Template for Core Parent Group:

Hi [name].

The news about Critical Race Theory isn't hard to miss, but easy to misunderstand. And as parents who recognize that the current controversy has the potential to substantially impact what our children are taught, we are motivated to know better and do better.

We respect our kids as individuals, we see their abilities to think independently, process and make sense of the world around them, and we have always told them the truth in ways they can understand, because our relationships with them are based in trust.

Which is why we need to protect our teachers' ability to teach the truth and our children's freedom to learn. Before we know it, laws and policy will be passed in our District and we will have little recourse to protect them.

If this resonates with you, please fill out this super quick survey and join us at our next parent group meeting:

Date:

Time:

Address/Zoom link:

Of course, please feel free to share with any parents you know who believe in and want the best future for their children, one rooted in empathy, compassion and truth.

In community,

[parent name]

[parent email address]

Core Parent Member Sign-Up Survey

Super easy way to assess the interest level and collect email addresses from all those committed to defending truth in education in your world.

Attach this [Parents Defending Truth survey](#) to all outreach communication to stay organized.

Core Parent Group Meeting Agenda:

Each of your Parent meetings, best to keep to 1 hour maximum, will likely focus on different agenda topics, below are some thought-starters you can cover in your meetings on your path to know better and do better.

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions
- Establish roles within the group and assign responsibilities:
 - Co-leads to set meeting dates and facilitate
 - Membership to lead outreach for new members
 - Communications to ensure your group posts to social
 - Letter/Email Writing co-ordination
- Discuss any of the concepts from the 'Get Informed' section of the PDT toolkit
- Distribute 'Letter/Email to Editor' template and write collaboratively/co-sign
- Distribute 'Letter/Email to School Administration' template and each of you draft your own letter or send as a collective to your School
- Distribute 'Letter/Email to School Board' template and each of your draft your own letter or send as a collective to members of the School Board
- Know Better Do Better Discussion re: Truth in Education
 - Read a chapter from a book or an article of interest
 - Watch a video or movie
 - Listen to a podcast
- Set up a central gmail address where members can communicate with each other and the group.
- Apprise members of Facebook group page where members can learn more and communicate with each other and the group.
- Set a game plan for next steps

Core Parent Group Meeting Conversation-Starters:

***“Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better, do better”
(Maya Angelou)***

The collective energy of your group in working towards defending truth in education and open minds are all you need to get going. Here are a few thought-starters to help guide the way to know better and do better:

Know Better:

- What exactly is Critical Race Theory and why is it news now?
- Have anti-Critical Race Theory laws been passed/being passed in my District?
- Do we know how our School District(s), Teachers, School Administration feels about teaching truth in education?
- Do we know who leads our PTA and when their next meeting will be?
- Do we know who our School Board is and when their next meeting will be?
- Do we know who our local Governor/Congressmen are and what their position is on teaching truth or on Critical Race Theory?
- What is the master narrative and how has it guided education in this country?
- What are some examples of lessons we have not been taught?
- What is one pivotal event in history that you never knew? How does that event change your perception of that period in time?
- What is one historical event that you can tie to something in our present day?
- Keep learning: articles, videos, movies, podcasts
- Group listen, watch, or read a resource that provides additional perspectives on historical truths

Do Better:

- Assign roles and responsibilities to interested members
- Fill in your calendar of to-do's and upcoming events and assign leads
- Write letters to your School Administration, School Board, Members of Congress
- Post on your groups' social media feed
- Plan a local protest

Email/Letter Templates:

Email/Letter to School Administration:

Dear [School Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Teaching Staff]

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] who attend [School]. I'm writing to express my concern about what is going on with the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' movement and how it may impact the teaching of truth in our school.

I believe in telling the truth to my child, even when it's hard. I respect my child as an individual, I see their ability to think independently and believe that their education should encourage them to think critically about our history, their present and future.

While I believe our nation has not always supported the teaching of a more comprehensive historical narrative -- one inclusive of the violence and oppression that helped to shape our nation, one that acknowledges the history of racism, and its systemic and structural impact in our history and in our world today -- I believe we are doing our children and our nation a great disservice in not providing them with the tools to better understand their world, and ultimately to heal the divisions so obviously between us all.

I believe that teaching the truth does not distort history, it rights it. A truthful curriculum engages children in a much broader investigation of the past, fills in the gaps, and helps them to better understand how our nation's history informs its present.

Ultimately, we live in a society that is far from colorblind. Our children see it, whether they acknowledge it consciously or not. We should want America to be the best it can be. A better future is one in which we stop denying our past. Given that truth in education is currently under siege from the right wing, we will be fighting for it, and I hope that as educators, you will stand in solidarity with us. Our kids, our community and country will be better for it.

In community,
[name]

[Additional Examples](#) of Effective Letters to School Administrators

Email/Letter to School Administration (If Anti-CRT Laws Passed):

Dear [School Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Teaching Staff]

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] who attend [School]. I am writing to express my concern about the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' laws that have been passed and how they might impact the teaching of truth in our school.

I want to do all I can to protect my children everyday. But I believe that lying to my child in the hopes that they don't 'see' harsh realities of our world is ignorant. They live in this world, they do see and feel the inequities and politics all around them. And not providing them with the context or tools to better understand their present through a more comprehensive evaluation of our past is unfair to them.

Here's what we know:

- Critical Race Theory is a higher education academic framework that seeks to understand how racism has shaped, how racial disparities have developed historically and how our laws continue to impact the lives of non-white people.
- Critical Race Theory is not a K-12 curriculum in any school, anywhere.
- CRT is not an anti-white reverse racism curriculum rooted in the indoctrination of our kids with divisive ideas that exacerbate racism, shames white people as oppressors and Black people as victims.
- The 'master narrative' of history is the dominant voice of our curriculum.

Here's what we hope you will do as life-long educators and learners:

- Advocate for our nation's collective truth to be taught in our classrooms to our children.
- Support teaching truth in your school.
- Recognize that by teaching the truth, you invite our children's whole selves into the classroom, to celebrate our varied humanity, to better understand the meaning of our differences, to develop critical thinking skills, and imagine together how they might change their world for the better.

As restrictive laws continue to be passed in our own District, we will be fighting to defend truth in education. We hope you'll stand in solidarity with us.

In community,
[name]

Email/Letter to School Administration (Loving Concern):

Dear [School Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Teaching Staff]

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] who attend [School]. I am writing to express my loving concern over the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' movement and how it might impact the teaching of truth in our school.

To be honest, I am only beginning to reckon with the nature of our collective history. The Critical Race Theory 'controversy' has sparked a curiosity in me and I'm learning new and eye-opening truths every day. And so, while I am no expert on what it is that the opposition to teaching the 'divisive' concepts under fire, I believe that you are.

I believe that you know better than any of us the collective truth of our nation's history. You know what is and what is not being taught to our children. You know whether your educators gloss over the atrocities, violence and oppression that built this country, and whether they uplift voices of groups erased by the master narrative of history. You also know how challenging it can be to teach this hard history and you choose to either find a way to do so or you do not.

I believe in telling my child(ren) the (age-appropriate) truth. Even when it's hard. I believe the purpose of education is to liberate the mind, provide the grounds for critical thinking and prepare our children to imagine together how they might change a world that needs changing.

Teaching truth is not to distort history, but to right it. A truthful curriculum engages children in a much broader investigation of the past, fills in the gaps, and provides them with the tools they need to better understand and seek to improve the world they so clearly feel and see around them.

You are the keeper of this knowledge, where do you stand in the teaching of truth?

In community,
[name]

Script Template for School PTA Meeting

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] and I was wondering if we could discuss today where our school administration stands as it relates to the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' movement and how it may impact the teaching of truth in our school.

We likely won't have answers to many of these questions, but as a parent who is certainly on the side of teaching our nation's collective truth to my child, I was hoping we could begin the conversation:

- What is our School's philosophy as it relates to teaching the collective truth of our nation's history to our children?
- How do our educators align with that philosophy?
- Do our educators layer in history that falls outside of what would be considered the master narrative?
- What are the critical historical narratives that you feel are missing from the [State] educational standards that guide our curriculum?
- Who is the dominant group or voice that leads our history lessons and how do you think they impact the narrative?
- Which voices are missing in the stories our children are learning?
- Why do we think those voices missing and what perspective might those voices bring to the narrative?
- What sort of professional development does our school provide to our educators to help them learn how to teach hard history in a safe way for all students?
- Have you created a forum (e.g. town hall) for parents to voice their perspectives on this issue?
- If our educators are threatened, either their jobs or their beings, for teaching the truth about racism, gender, sexuality, oppression within the context of U.S. history, will you stand behind them?
- How can parents learn more about our nation's collective history?

Email/Letter/Script Template to School Board (Generic):

Dear [Member of School Board --send separate letters to every member]

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] who attend [School] in your District. I am writing to express my concern about the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' movement and how it may impact the teaching of truth in our school.

I am aware that your mission is to advocate for effective policies that advance the education and well-being of our children. Because you serve as a unified voice representing what you believe is in the best interests of our children's education, I want to make sure you hear my voice.

I am an American citizen who believes in telling the (age-appropriate) truth to my child, even when it's hard. I respect my child as an individual, I see their ability to think independently and believe that their education should encourage them to think critically about our history, their present and future.

While I believe our nation has not always supported the teaching of a more comprehensive historical narrative, teaching truth will not distort history, it will right it. I believe we are doing our children and our nation a great disservice in not providing them with a truthful curriculum that will engage them in a much broader investigation of the past, fills in the gaps, and helps them to better understand how our nation's history informs its present.

Ultimately, we live in a society that is far from colorblind. Our children see it, whether they acknowledge it consciously or not. You should want America to be the best it can be and the role you play in furthering our District's curriculum to serve the best interests of our children is critical.

I will continue to fight for the truth to be told to my child. And I hope that as elected public and civil servants entrenched in the world of education, you will stand in solidarity with us. Our kids, our community and country will be better for it.

In community,
[name]

[Additional Examples](#) of Letters to School Board

Email/Letter Template to School Board (If Anti-CRT Laws Passed):

Dear [Member of School Board --send separate letters to every member]

My name is [name] and I am the proud parent of [children's names] who attend [School] in your District. I am writing to express my concern about the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' laws that have been passed and how they might impact the teaching of truth in our school.

I am aware that your mission is to advocate for effective policies that advance the education and well-being of our children. Because you serve as a unified voice representing what you believe is in the best interests of our children's education, I want to make sure you hear my voice.

Here's what we know:

- Critical Race Theory is a higher education academic framework that seeks to understand how racism has shaped US laws, how racial disparities have developed historically and how our laws continue to impact the lives of non-white people.
- Critical Race Theory is not a K-12 curriculum in any school, anywhere.
- CRT is not an anti-white reverse racism curriculum rooted in the indoctrination of our kids with divisive ideas that exacerbate racism, shames white people as oppressors and Black people as victims.
- The 'master narrative' of history is the dominant voice of our curriculum.

Here's what we hope you will do as life-long educators and learners:

- Advocate for our nation's collective truth to be taught in our classrooms to our children.
- Support teaching truth in your school.
- Recognize that by teaching the truth, you invite our children's whole selves into the classroom, to celebrate our varied humanity, to better understand the meaning of our differences, to develop critical thinking skills, and imagine together how they might change their world for the better.

As restrictive laws continue to be passed in our own District, we will be fighting to defend truth in education. As elected civil servants, we hope you'll stand in solidarity with us.

In community,
[name]

Email/Letter/Script Template to Members of Congress:

Dear [Member of Congress -- send separate letters to each Congressmen and Senators!]

My name is [name] and I am a constituent from your District [State of _____]. I am writing to express my concern about the current 'anti-Critical Race Theory' laws that have been [are being] passed and how they might impact the teaching of truth in our school.

I believe that your role is to advocate for effective policies that advance the education and well-being of our children. Because you serve as an elected official representing what you believe is in the best interests of our children's education, I want to make sure you hear my voice.

Here's what we all know:

- Critical Race Theory is a higher education academic framework that seeks to understand how racism has shaped US laws, how racial disparities have developed historically and how our laws continue to impact the lives of non-white people.
- Critical Race Theory is not a K-12 curriculum in any school, anywhere.
- CRT is not an anti-white reverse racism curriculum rooted in the indoctrination of our kids with divisive ideas that exacerbate racism, shames white people as oppressors and Black people as victims.
- The 'master narrative' of history is the dominant voice of our curriculum.

Here's what we hope you will do as an elected serving the best interests of our kids:

- Vote against anti-Critical Race Theory or anti-History laws in our District [State]
- Advocate for our nation's collective truth to be taught in our classrooms to our children.

As restrictive laws continue to sweep across the country, we, as parents, will be fighting to defend truth in education for our children. As elected civil servants, I hope you'll stand in solidarity with us.

In community,
[name]

Email/Letter Template for Letter to Editor:

A letter to your local or national news/media editor is a great way to respond to an article or topic you've read about or seen through that media outlet. Don't be shy, your voice is welcome! Here are a few [simple tips](#) to keep in mind!

Dear [Editor at Fox News]

Your recent article, 'What is Critical Race Theory?' only serves to contribute to the ambiguity surrounding the 'controversy,' I would like to clarify for those interested. Critical Race Theory is a higher education academic framework that seeks to understand how racism has shaped US laws, how racial disparities have developed historically and how our laws continue to impact the lives of non-white people. It is not a K-12 curriculum in any school, anywhere. It is not an anti-white reverse racism curriculum rooted in the indoctrination of our kids with divisive ideas that exacerbate racism, shames white people as oppressors and Black people as victims. How about including that as a simple answer to the question you pose?

Carly Thompson. Great Falls, Montana. cthompson@gmail.com. (406) 577-8843

Press Release Template

A letter to your local or national news/media editor is a great way to respond to an article or topic you've read about or seen through that media outlet. Don't be shy, your voice is welcome! Here are a few [simple tips](#) to keep in mind!

PARENTS
DEFENDING
TRUTH

defending truth in education. discussion guide for children.

If you're here, you believe in telling your child the truth, even when it's hard, in an age appropriate way of course. And as you may be learning, there is much about our nation's history and its impact on the world they live in that our children are not taught in the classroom.

But you can help. Our job, as parents, is to support our children in their learning and teach them the ways of the world. By the time kids are in kindergarten, they have already learned to embrace prevailing attitudes and ideas.

Children as young as four show signs of understanding of fairness, equity and justice. Your child will surprise you with their innate sense of understanding once you open the doors to the knowledge, resources and skills to think more critically about truth in their education. They already know what they don't know in their hearts.

Parents Defending Truth Discussion Guide for Children

Here are our top 10 strategies to keep in mind:

1. **It starts with us.** It's important to reflect on what we know, what we need to unlearn and learn, our resistances and openness to an expanded knowledge base, so that we can help guide our children from a position of comfort and confidence.
2. **Meet your child where they are.** Help your child reflect on what they already know, maybe about something they're learning in school that week, and provide greater context and information to expand their knowledge base.
3. **Ask lots of questions.** Helping your child fill in the gaps of a more comprehensive and accurate version of our nation's history by asking important questions regarding the voices that are missing from any period in history they might be studying.
4. **Learn with your child.** If there is an article, a podcast, a video, a movie or even a book that you have come across that you feel would be age-appropriate, share it, reflect upon it with them, and ask them 'what messages did they get'?
5. **Picture books.** Picture books that touch on any narrative, any historical event, any perspective on any period of history are a great place to start. Ask your children what they see, what they know, what they learned, whether there may be voices missing and what might they say?
6. **Find age-appropriate resources.** Beyond picture books, seek out short videos, movies, literature or podcasts that expose children to diverse perspectives of our nations' history.
7. **Be consistent.** Helping them to think critically about the way they learn should be a theme they can apply to anything they learn. By consistently reinforcing the need to ask "curious" questions that might fill in the gaps of whatever they're learning, you'll help them to become the critical thinkers you want them to be.
8. **Help your child accept discomfort.** Be prepared that there will often be questions you cannot answer, conversations that become uncomfortable or messy. Feeling will come and go. Ask your child to share with you what they're feeling and work through it together.
9. **Raise an "upstander"** An "upstander" is someone who stands up for themselves and others. Teach your child that they deserve to be taught the truth and they will stand alongside you as you defend truth in education in your community.
10. **Expect and accept non-closure.** Learning is life-long. Teach your children to be curious, to ask questions, to seek diverse perspectives and most of all to know that there will always be new things to learn.

Definitions You Might Need

Here are a few basic definitions (source: ADL) you might find useful. Use [ADL's Education Glossary](#) for additional words and terminology you may come across in reflecting with your children.

Ally

Someone who speaks out on behalf of or takes actions that are supportive of someone who is targeted by bias or bullying, either themselves or someone else.

Anti-Bias

An active commitment to challenging bias within oneself and in one's institutions (like schools).

Bias

An inclination or preference, either for or against an individual or group that affects fair judgment.

Classism:

The marginalization or oppression of people from low-income or working class households based on a social hierarchy where people are ranked according to socioeconomic status. *Elementary school version:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against people because of their socioeconomic status (how much money their families have/do not have).

Discrimination:

The denial of justice, resources, and fair treatment of individuals and groups (often based on social identity), through employment, education, housing, banking, political rights, etc. *Elementary School version:* Unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity (eg. race, gender, ability, religion, culture, etc.) Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

Diversity:

Difference, not "different." Diversity includes the wide range of human characteristics used to make or identify individual and group identities. The population of the US is made up of people belonging to a diversity of groups characterized by culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.

Equality:

Everyone having the same rights, opportunities and resources. Equality stresses fairness and parity in having access to social goods and services. *Elementary School version:* Having the same or similar rights and opportunities as others.

Equity: Everyone getting what they need in order to have access, opportunities, and a fair chance to succeed. It recognizes that the same for everyone (equality) doesn't truly address needs and therefore, specific solutions and remedies, which may be different, are necessary. *Elementary School version:* the quality of being fair or just.

Genocide: The act of or intent to deliberately and systematically annihilate an entire religious, racial, national or cultural group.

Hate: An extreme dislike for something, someone or a group. Hate that is based on an aspect of someone's identity (eg. race, religion, sex, gender expression or identity, ability, sexual orientation, etc) can result in interpersonal bias, discrimination, hate incidents, hate crimes and/or involvement in an organized hate group.

Ideology: A collection of beliefs, ideas, and/or values that are not based on factual evidence and form the basis of economic, sociological or political policy.

Inclusion: An environment and commitment to respect, represent, and accept diverse social groups and identities; an environment where all people feel like they belong.

Injustice: A situation in which the rights of a person or a group of people are ignored, disrespected, or discriminated against.

Oppression: A system of mistreatment, exploitation and abuse of a marginalized group(s) for the social, economic, or political benefit of a dominant group(s). This happens within a social hierarchy where people are ranked according to status, often based on aspects of social identity.

Privilege: The unearned and often unrecognized advantages, benefits, or rights conferred upon people based on their membership in a dominant group (eg. white people, heterosexual people, men, people without disabilities, etc.) beyond what is commonly experienced by members of the marginalized group.

Race: A social construct that refers to the categories into which society places individuals on the basis of physical characteristics (eg. skin color, hair type, facial form, eye shape). Though many believed that race was determined by biology, it is now widely accepted (genome project) that all humans are 99.9% genetically the same.

Racism: The marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people. *Elementary School version:* The disrespect, harm and mistreatment of people of color based on made up ideas that white people deserve to be in charge and treated better.

Segregation: The separation or isolation of a race, class or other group by enforced or voluntary restriction of their access to housing, schools, etc. or by other discriminatory means. *Elementary school version:* The practice of keeping people of different races, religions, etc., separate from each other.

Social Justice: A set of conditions and principles that ensure every person has equitable economic, political, and social rights, access and opportunities.

Systemic Racism: A combination of systems, institutions and factors that advantage white people and for people of color, cause widespread harm and disadvantages in access and opportunity. One person or even one group of people did not create systemic racism, rather it: (1) is grounded in the history of our laws and institutions which were created on a foundation of white supremacy; (2) exists in the institutions and policies that advantage white people and disadvantage people of color; and (3) takes places in interpersonal communication and behavior (e.g., slurs, bullying, offensive language) that maintains and supports systemic inequities and systemic racism.

PARENTS
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defending truth in education. get informed.

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- [Truth in Education 101](#): What it is, Why it matters & Filling in the Gaps

This guide only scratches the surface of the layered history of our nation culled from a multitude of primary and secondary sources. Every book or article you read, every video or movie you watch, every podcast or talk you listen to will open the door to a world of knowing better and doing better, both for yourself and for your children.

[Additional Resources](#)

Get Informed

Critical Race Theory 101 *Making Sense of the Misinformation*

What it is	What it isn't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Race Theory is a legal framework from the 70's created by academics in higher education seeking to critically examine the law as it intersects with issues of race. It is not a K-12 curriculum taught in schools, anywhere.• Critical Race Theory is a discipline that seeks to understand how racism has shaped U.S. laws and how laws have continued to impact the lives of non-white people.• Critical Race Theory provides a framework for students to understand how racial disparities developed historically and endure today.• Critical Race Theory has become demonized as a K-12 curriculum that is "racist against whites" and conflated with the education of anything related to systemic racism, white privilege, and even basic concepts of equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CRT is not a K-12 curriculum taught in any school, anywhere.• An anti-white, destructive, reverse-racist education K-12 curriculum rooted in the indoctrination of our children with divisive ideas that exacerbate racism and foster activism in our schools.• An educational K-12 curriculum that divides students by group identities (ie. race and sex) and assigns blame to groups of children on the basis of race, sex, and other group identities, casting and shaming white people as oppressors and Black People as victims.• An educational curriculum that champions a distorted notion of "equity" and declares, slanderously, that any departure from equality of outcomes is the result of "implicit racism," "systemic racism," or other forms of malice.

Critical Race Theory 101

Making Sense of the Anti-CRT or Anti-History Laws Being Passed

Restrictive laws being passed:

To better understand how widespread the [current legislative efforts](#) are to ban “Critical Race Theory” from our classrooms, below is a recap of how this wave of anti-CRT is being used to more intently restrict even further what can and cannot be taught to our children:

- Since January, 41 states have introduced bills that would limit how teachers can discuss racism, gender identity and sexism; 14 states have imposed bans and restrictions through legislation.
- Most of the state bills that have passed don’t mention the words “critical race theory” explicitly (with the exception of Idaho and North Dakota).

What is actually being banned?

The [legislative language](#) differs across state lines, but the impact is far-reaching for K-12 educators with state funding withheld and bans that include:

- The teaching in schools or training of employees in business of historical racism, discrimination, and its impact on modern U.S. society.
- Any discussions about conscious and unconscious bias, privilege, discrimination, and oppression, extending beyond race to include gender/sexuality and diversity lectures and discussions.
- A ban on curriculum that promotes “divisive concepts” and “critical race theory” including specified curriculum --1619 Project, Learning for Justice Curriculum by SPLC, We Stories, programs by Educational Equity Consultants, BLM at School, Teaching for Change, Zinn Education Project -- and allows for the firing of teachers who teach certain concepts related to race and gender.
- Prohibits K-12 public schools from instruction related to critical race theory defined in the bill as teaching “that racism is systemically embedded in American society and the American legal system to facilitate racial inequality.”

Why does it matter?

Within the next year, these [laws that broadly limit](#) how our teachers can talk about race, gender and sexuality will continue to be enacted across the country. Teachers afraid of backlash will self-censor and our children will continue to learn a history of even more far-reaching *untruths*.

Get Informed

Glossary of Terms 101

A cheat sheet for misrepresented terms

Term	What it is	What it isn't*
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, People of Color; a term used to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice.	Non-European people used for neo-racist policies
CULTURAL COMPETENCE	To value the diversity of various cultures, identities and races; self-assess, address dynamics; apply cultural knowledge; adapt to cultural contexts within communities.	Catering to stereotypes associated with identity groups.
DECOLONIZATION	Seeking justice against ongoing colonialism and colonial mentalities that permeate institutions and systems of government	Removing European influence.
DISCRIMINATION	Unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age or sexual orientation.	Judgment based on experience, facts, predictions, and preferences.
DIVERSITY	Difference, not "different." Diversity includes the wide range of human characteristics used to make or identify individual and group identities.	An identity-based approach to society; includes only those who agree with social justice.
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	Fair treatment of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.	Using environmental protection for unrelated political purposes.
EQUITY	Equity ensures people have what they need to reach their full potential and that essential programs, services, activities, and technologies are accessible to all.	Equality of outcomes plus reparations.
HATE SPEECH	Abusive or threatening speech or writing expressing prejudice against a particular group, on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation.	An expression of opinion that the accuser finds objectionable.

IMPLICIT BIAS	Unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; different from explicit biases that individuals may choose to intentionally conceal.	Unconscious bigotry as a result of socialization by oppressive systems.
INCLUSION	A sense of connectedness or belonging to others, conditions where all feel accepted, affirmed, safe, empowered, and supported.	Restricted speech and justification for purges.
MICRO-AGGRESSION	Verbal, nonverbal slights or insults, intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons based on a marginalized group membership.	Small slights perceived as bigotry.
RACIAL JUSTICE	Proactive creation, examination and enforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions to promote equitable opportunities, outcomes and treatment for people of all races.	Racial favoritism.
SOCIAL JUSTICE	A vision of society in which the distribution of resources and power is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.	Group entitlements.
SYSTEMIC RACISM	The ways in which policies, practices, and procedures recreate racial inequity, create advantages for whites and marginalization and oppression for persons of color.	Differences in outcome that are always due to systemic biases.
WHITE FRAGILITY	A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves by white people.	Dehumanizing condescension of white people encouraging a cult of white guilt.
WHITE PRIVILEGE	A set of unearned advantages granted to those who are or pass as white; providing greater access to power and resources.	European moral culpability.
WHITE SUPREMACY	The all encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white, and the practices based upon that assumption.	Niche sector of society supported by outwardly racist individuals

*as misrepresented by conservative media and parent organizations.

Get Informed

Categories of Schools 101

How Laws Affect Different Schools Differently

Public Schools	Private Schools
Public schools are funded by federal, state and local governments and so our government has some influence over their curriculum, and enforces all federal guidelines, including the U.S. Constitution, anti-discrimination laws and the freedom of expression and speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. All public schools must be open enrollment to all students within the catchment area designated for the school by the local District.	Private Schools are supported by a private organization or private individuals rather than by the government and are not subject to the federal regulations that govern public schools, including the U.S. Constitution. Private schools have greater flexibility when setting curriculum; their teachers are protected under the anti-discrimination laws and the freedom of expression and speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.
Charter Schools	Magnet Schools
Charter Schools are Public schools and also funded with tax dollars, but are granted greater flexibility to determine their curriculum in exchange for greater accountability of student outcomes. Charter schools are also protected under the U.S. Constitution, anti-discrimination laws and the freedom of expression and speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.	Magnet Schools are Public schools that offer special instruction and programs (e.g. flexible curriculum built around STEM or the arts) designed to attract a more diverse student body from throughout the school district. Magnet programs are often selective and more competitive than traditional public or charter schools.

Get Informed

Schools Rights 101

Defending Your Rights and Teaching of Truth

The First Amendment

The [first amendment](#) includes specific freedoms that protect our K-12 students' freedoms of expression, but does not necessarily protect those same freedoms for educators.

- **Prohibited Speech:** School officials cannot formally restrict most student speech. The Constitution protects student speech that does not 'materially and substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of a school.' The burden is on the school to justify any restrictions on student speech.
- **Compelled Speech:** School districts cannot compel student speech on any topic. The First Amendment not only limits the government from punishing a person for his speech, it also prevents the government from punishing a person for refusing to articulate, advocate, or adhere to the government's approved messages.
- **Retaliation:** School officials cannot retaliate or take any 'adverse action' against students who engage in protected speech in the classroom, on school grounds, or off school grounds.

Title IX

[Title IX](#) protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance -- our public schools.

Why does this matter?

- Evidence that students outside the protected class were treated differently can raise an inference of discrimination.
- It does not need to be proven that a teacher or school intentionally discriminated against students, but that they ignored or encouraged discrimination. It could be argued that ignoring the full accounting of our students' history is discriminatory.

The Fourteenth Amendment

The [Fourteenth Amendment](#) to the Consitution lays the foundation that teachers have the right to be free from discrimination based on race, sex, and national origin -- as well as freedom of expression, academics, privacy, and religion under *the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution*. The due process clause within the Fourteenth Amendment may be what ultimately protects our teachers' constitutional rights to teach freely.

Academic Freedom

[Academic freedom](#) is a moral and legal concept expressing the conviction that scholars should have freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts (including those that are inconvenient to external political groups or to authorities) without being targeted for repression, job loss, or imprisonment. It protects an institution's First Amendment right to decide on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.

The Master Narrative 101

What it is and why it matters.

What it is.

Most people are familiar with a specific narrative and framing of American history -- bound to our Founder's ideals rather than to their reality. It's the big story from which all others emanate: the narrative taught in schools, the story depicted in movies, and the tale told by everyone from politicians to parents. The story of how we came to be and how the world works. That is, how the world works as told by the dominant white culture, reinforcing the 'natural order' of the privileged position of the dominant by virtue of their class, race, gender, and religion.

The challenge for educators is that the master narrative presents an oversimplified and neatly packaged version of history -- obscuring a complex, rich and nuanced comprehensive portrait of American history and denying students critical lenses through which to examine, analyze, and interpret dilemmas, challenges and social issues today.

Why it matters.

Master narratives uphold existing power dynamics. They celebrate or absolve groups who already hold power, or demonize or blame those who are marginalized. Simply put, master narratives do not allow us to see and affirm all of our children, only some of them. Frequently, they are accepted, and repeated without (much) critical thinking, challenge, or conversation devoted to them.

And by ignoring a critical study of the complicated reality of our history, we rob ourselves of the tools to understand how the past informs the present and constructively move into the future: we don't see clearly the cause-and-effect dynamic between legalized segregation during Jim Crow, and current residential segregation, between discriminatory housing policies of the New Deal and the generational wealth gap, between the GI bill and the poverty gap, between discriminatory educational laws and the achievement gap, between redlining and environmental justice.

Above all, we must realize that without a full telling of our nation's history, we do not recognize the lives and legacy of our non-white children. And when we don't present to them a full picture of the world they came from and the one they live in, we are not giving them the tools to navigate that world into their best futures. We hold all colors of children hostage to the world that we've built before them. If we can bring the truths of the past into the light of the present. Only then will we get closer to the American ideals within the master narrative.

Keep on Learning:

This guide only scratches the surface of the multi-dimensional history of our nation. Every book or article you read, video or movie you watch, podcast or talk you listen to will open the door to a world of knowing better and doing better, both for yourself and for your children. [Additional Resources](#)

Get Informed

The Master Narrative 101

Examples of the Historical Narrative we've all been taught.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

The narrative of the American dream leads us to believe in our society as a meritocracy -- that success will come to you through hard work and determination, and that the pathway to that success is accessible to all. This entails going to school, going to college, getting a career, getting married, having a child, buying a house, working hard, and living happily ever after.

AMERICA'S FOUNDING

The familiar narrative is that America was settled by European immigrants with noble ideals, that Americans are white or European in ancestry, and that the nation was exceptional, dedicated to freedom and equality as a "self-evident truth." We must forget that George Washington was a slave owner or that Thomas Jefferson had mulatto children or that Alexander Hamilton had Negro blood, and just remember what we regard as credible, patriotic and inspiring.

SLAVERY

Slavery and oppression have been treated as 'peculiar institutions,' aberrations or historical accidents that have been corrected in the always progressive and upward movement of our nation's democratic destiny. The atrocities and violence of the slave trade as a conscious choice and its impact on the growth of our country as an economic superpower have been all but ignored.

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE SOUTH

The master narrative would have us believe that relationships between the races in the South were oppressive and that many Southerners were very prejudiced against Blacks (denying the existence and persistence of racism outside the South). Nonetheless, the narrative obscures slavery's role in the Civil War, as it was fought for 'State's rights.'

THE MONTGOMERY BOYCOTT AND THE END OF SEGREGATION

One day, a nice old, but tired lady, Rosa Parks, wouldn't get up from her seat on a segregated bus and got arrested. Martin Luther King Jr. became engaged in the struggle, and the Montgomery bus boycott followed. And sometime later, King delivered his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech, and segregation was over.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE END OF RACISM

The civil rights movement began in 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was wrong. Dr. Martin Luther King then led a nonviolent crusade, receiving unwavering support of the federal government. Americans, realizing that discrimination was wrong, moved to remove racial prejudice and discrimination from American life, as evidenced by the Civil Rights Acts of 1964. The movement peaked with passage of the Voting Rights Act (1965), and then unraveled when African

Americans rejected nonviolence and embraced Black Power. Dr. King was tragically slain in 1968. Fortunately, by that time the country had fundamentally changed for the better. The movement was a remarkable victory for all Americans, paving the way for the nation's first Black President.

Get Informed

Truth in Education 101

What it is and why it matters.

What it is.

The truth of our nation's history is more layered than any of us can imagine, and there are countless tangential narratives of truth, complexity, and nuance that branch off of the master narrative.

Fascinating, eye-opening, earth-shattering truths that fill in the gaps, add dimension and context to the history we are taught. Truths that allow us to gain perspective on our past, build bridges to our present, and carve out pathways to a more just future.

Why it matters.

If you're reading this, you know why truth in education matters. And while there are countless educators across our country that are uplifting voices that are missing from the pages of our textbooks, and powerful organizations providing educational resources to help foster a more comprehensive reflection on learning, as parents, we too can play a role in ensuring that the tide turns towards 360° truth in our children's schools and that the anti-truth laws masquerading as anti-CRT laws are not passed, prohibiting the freedom of our teachers to teach and our children to learn.

But first, we must unlearn what we know to be 'true' and begin to learn what is meant by 'teaching truths.' We do not need to become historians, but if we are better educated in the 'basics' of the totality of our history, we will be able to defend truth in education more effectively.

Where to begin?

Honestly, it's an overwhelming task to truly understand the 360° of our nation's history, but it begins with a critical lens and asking important questions regarding any period in history being studied:

- Who is the dominant group or voice and how do they impact the narrative?
- Which voices are missing in the stories we are learning?
- Why are those voices missing?
- What perspective might those voices bring to the narrative?
- What are the questions we should be asking to learn from all relevant voices?
- What were the tangential political, economic and/or social factors impacting the period we're studying and how can we bring the implications of those to the fore?

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Truth in Education 101

Examples of Filling in the gaps of history with critical questions.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

- How has the legacy of racial discrimination within housing, the criminal justice system, policing, voting rights, our healthcare, educational and employment systems informed widespread generational wealth, health, poverty, achievement and environmental justice disparities that exist today?
- How have those disparities impacted BIPOC communities' ability to leverage the ideals of a meritocracy?

AMERICA'S FOUNDING

- What is the hard history surrounding the Native American genocide? Who were the Indigenous communities that preceded the 'white settlers' across America and what became of their livelihood, culture and legacy?
- What was the nature of colonialism, and colonial enslavement of Indigenous people?
- How was Slavery, which Europeans practiced before they invaded the Americas, important to all colonial powers and how did it exist in the founding of American colonies.

SLAVERY

- How was slavery and the slave trade central to the development and growth of the colonial economies and what is now the United States?
- How were protections for slavery embedded in the founding documents, the federal government, Supreme Court and Senate from 17th to 19th centuries?
- Why wasn't slavery a 'peculiar institution' but a national institution motivated by a desire for profit?
- How did enslaved people resist the efforts of their enslavers to reduce them to commodities in both revolutionary and everyday ways.

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE SOUTH

- Examine the expansion and protection of slavery as the cause of the Civil War.
- Analyze the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent decision that several slave states made to secede from the Union to ensure the preservation and expansion of slavery.
- Examine how Union policies concerning slavery and African American military service and describe how free Black and enslaved communities affected the Civil War.

THE MONTGOMERY BOYCOTT AND THE END OF SEGREGATION

- Delve deeper in the activist life, her role within the NAACP of Rosa Parks before the boycott.
- Understand the role that Jim Crow laws played in both the North and South to continue slavery up and through the 20th century.
- Examine how and why a United States that legally ended segregation 50 years ago still remains a segregated country today.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE END OF RACISM

- Dispel the myths of the Reconstruction era and its role as a precursor to the Civil Rights Movement
- Analyze the discriminatory policies within FDR's New Deal, the GI Bill, the Federal Housing Assistance Loan Program, the Social Security Act, and the generational consequences of those policies for African Americans
- Explore the organizing and activism (including civil disobedience) of the youth-led Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to secure freedom and democracy in the United States.
- Expand knowledge base on the beliefs and lives of key figures that shaped the civil rights movement: Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, E.D. Nixon, Emma Baker, W.E.B DuBois, Sojourner Truth
- Explore the FBI's role within the Civil Rights Movement, the political strategy of McCarthyism
- Explore what happened to the Civil Rights Movement after the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Keep on Learning:

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