

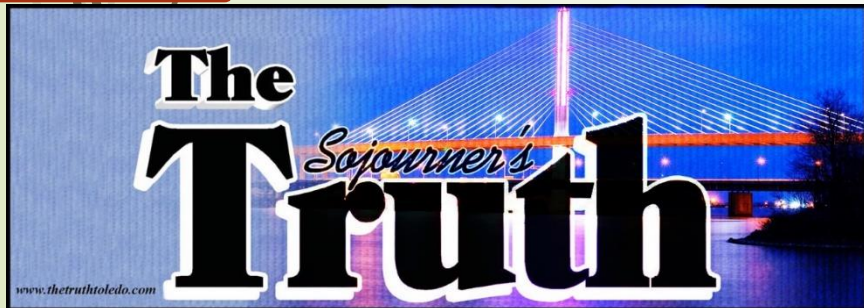
A critical look at systemic racism in education: The need for a *racial equity policy*

Hope Bland, Ph.D.

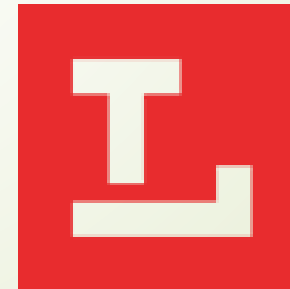
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Moderated by Lynne Hamer, Ph.D.


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Anti-Racism Teach-Ins
August-Labor Day, 2020
On Zoom in Toledo, Ohio



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“It is hard for me to believe I finished high school in the year 2000 touting so many racist ideas. A racist culture had handed me the ammunition to shoot Black people, to shoot myself, and I took and used it. **Internalized racism** is the real Black on Black crime”

~Kendi X Ibram



Systemic Racism
IN EDUCATION

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*

Racist: One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or Expressing a racist idea.

Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas that produce and normalizes racial inequities

Antiracist: Someone who is supporting an antiracist policy by their actions or expressing an antiracist idea



How do we conceptualize Systemic Racism?

"Systemic racism includes the complex array of antiblack practices, the unjustly gained political-economic power of whites, the continuing economic and other resource inequalities along racial lines, and the white racist ideologies and attitudes created to maintain and rationalize white privilege and power. *Systemic* here means that the core racist realities are manifested in each of society's major parts [...] each major part of U.S. society—the economy, politics, education, religion, the family—reflects the fundamental reality of systemic racism."

Joe Feagin "Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations (2019)

We are surrounded by racial inequity, as visible as the law, as hidden as our private thoughts. ~Ibram X. Kendi





Individual Racism

Beliefs, attitudes and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. This is usually what we think of first when we think racism. Can occur at both a unconscious and conscious level.

YWCA, Eliminating racism, empowering women, Mankato



Institutional Racism

Done by individuals of informal social groups, governed by behavioral norms that support racist ideas within social and political institutions such as schools districts, the criminal justice system, housing.

Occurs when a certain group is targeted and discriminated against based upon race inside institutions. Often implicit in ideas and attitudes, so often unnoticed by the individual expressing it.



Structural Racism

Normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics, historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. A system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by White supremacy- the preferential treatment , privilege and power for White people at the expense of Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous/Native, Arab and other racially/ethnically oppressed people.

YWCA, Eliminating racism, empowering women, Mankato

Racism itself is Institutional, Structural, and Systemic

~ *Kendi X. Ibram*



History of Institutional Racism in US Public Schools

- ▶ Dating to the 1800's, Native American children were taken from their homes and forced into boarding schools; forced to abandon their native language and adopt a foreign religion. Education was used to assimilate to white culture forcibly. Institutional racism created a belief that White culture was far better than the Native American way
- ▶ Racial biases expressed with Chinese. Chinese American-children were barred completely from going to school In California in the 1800s, for example, school administrators routinely denied Chinese American children entrance into schools based on their ancestry. Although *Tape v. Hurley* (1884) established that Chinese American children had the right to attend public schools, California school boards continued to be permitted to force Chinese American students to be educated in segregated Chinese schools for decades thereafter
- ▶ Schools also routinely excluded Latino students from educational opportunities during the turn of the twentieth century, particularly in the southwest region of the United States where Latinx populations were more expansive. It was not until 1931 that the first successful local school desegregation court decision — made by a San Diego judge in *Roberto Alvarez v. The Lemon Grove School Board* - prohibited the The History of Inequity in Education Lemon Grove School Board from turning away Mexican American students. However, the rationale behind the decision was not wholly driven by social justice for all; rather, the judge determined that children of Mexican origin were considered to be of the White race, and consequently were not subject to segregation rules that applied to other minority races. *These are merely a few of the many instances of racial discrimination and exclusion within our nation's schools.*

Amity L. Noltemeyer Julie Mujic Sacred Heart University
Caven S. McLoughlin History of Inequity in Education

History of Institutional Racism in US Public Schools

- ▶ ***Because of its centrality to the topic of disproportionality, the discriminatory treatment of Black students in our nation's educational system warrants particular scrutiny.*** Africans began their experiences in America as indentured servants or slaves, neither of which were labor situations that they entered into willingly. Instead, the capture of Africans on Africa's western coast and their transportation across the Atlantic in chains established a persistent precedent for the lack of rights and inequitable treatment of Blacks prior to the Civil War.
- ▶ During the early years of slavery, most Whites blocked Blacks in America — freed or enslaved — from obtaining opportunities for education. In fact, the 1800s ushered in an increasing number of state laws that made it illegal for Black students to be taught to read and write in the South
- ▶ Some individuals and organizations educated Black individuals with private funds, although these initiatives typically were driven by a desire to teach Christian principles to the slaves
- ▶ The Quakers also had a strong role in educating Black Americans. In the late 1700s, the New Jersey and Philadelphia Quakers each opened a school for Black learners, and such efforts continued to expand into the 1800s. Although such advances were promising, these individuals continued to be excluded from higher education until Oberlin College became the first college to admit Black students in 1833. Despite these isolated signs of hope, the majority of Whites in the United States continued to discourage or prohibit the education of Black men and women.

History of Institutional Racism in US Public Schools

- ▶ The legal rights of Black individuals improved following the Civil War. Slavery was outlawed with the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865 and Black Americans were recognized as citizens with equal protection and privileges with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. Despite these legislative advances, differential treatment of Black students in the educational system persisted. The period of Reconstruction brought promise along with the emergence of schools for newly freed Black slaves. However, the end of Reconstruction in 1877 resulted in slowed or reversed progress.
- ▶ In addition, in the late 1800s, Jim Crow laws were widely enacted throughout the country, mandating racial segregation in public places based on a "separate-but-equal" philosophy. This philosophy was further strengthened in 1896 when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the separate-but-equal doctrine related to the schools in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Unfortunately, this doctrine was flawed, with sufficient evidence that the schools for Black children remained inferior in quality and funding (Reef, 2009). Black students were even faced with challenges finding a segregated school to attend.
- ▶ Amity L. Noltemeyer Julie Mujic Sacred Heart University Caven S. McLoughlin History of Inequity in Education

History of Institutional Racism in US Public Schools

- ▶ The tipping point to these injustices came in 1954 when *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, decreeing that "separate" was not "equal." Although this ruling demanded that schools must be desegregated, progress was slow and Black students encountered substantial opposition in some areas. This was particularly true in the South, where resistance was at times quite dramatic and even violent
- ▶ For example, the passage of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 - which prohibited federally funded programs from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, or gender - allowed for serious enforcement of the Brown decree by allowing the U.S. Department of Justice to withhold federal funds from school districts that discriminated against Black students. The same year, the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights was established to enforce civil rights in education. Despite these advances, many school districts continued to experience de facto segregation, which in some locales in the 1970s and 1980s was addressed through mandated busing of students within the district to other schools to ensure racial integration.
- ▶ Amity L. Noltemeyer Julie Mujic Sacred Heart University Caven S. McLoughlin History of Inequity in Education

History of Institutional Racism in US Public School

- Despite slow progress and continued inequities, there have been indicators of increased success for Black students. For example, the gaps related to school attendance, literacy skills, grade completion, and college attendance all markedly improved from the earliest days of education.
- Additionally, Black students are significantly overrepresented in special education programs and exhibit an "achievement gap" when compared to White students
- Also, extremely segregated Black schools have historically been associated with less equitable outcomes
- School to Prison Pipeline

Today, BIPOC children continue to face educational inequities when compared to their White Counterparts:

- ~Low standardized Test Scores
- ~Discipline (Suspension/Expulsion)
- ~Gifted Programs
- ~Special Education
- ~Graduate Rates
- ~Segregated Schools
- ~Lack of Culturally Appropriate Curriculaum



Critical Examination of Systemic Racism

Because systemic racism in education is a root cause of so many other inequities that BIPOC face, it is critical that allies stand shoulder to shoulder with these communities in calling for large-scale changes to the U.S. education system. Particularly because education is often thought of as a local concern or personal matter for parents and families, it is especially important that allies lift their voices for BIPOC communities to ensure that the call for change is unified and focused.

By Roby Chatterji July 8, 2020, *Fighting Systemic Racism in K-12 Education: Helping Allies Move From the Keyboard to the School Board*



Critical examination of Systemic Racism

Allies should also work with Black communities to support efforts to combat systemic racism in education, housing, and other social policies. Their opposition, silence, or lack of engagement in these efforts can contribute to the perpetuation of inequities and further limit access to opportunities for communities that are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Roby Chatterji July 8, 2020, Fighting Systemic Racism in K-12 Education: Helping Allies Move From the Keyboard to the School Board

Systemic Racism

It is critically important for newly energized allies, especially those who are not Black, to go beyond hashtag activism and enter this work by listening to the voices of community members and educating themselves on the history, causes, and consequences of systemic racism in the United States.



~Ibram X Kendi on Racism and Education

- ▶ “Really, when you look at racist ideas historically, we see teachers, we see principles whose schools and classrooms have these notorious disciplinary gaps and instead of saying, ‘You know what? It’s something that I’m doing.’ They say, ‘There’s something wrong with these Black boys,’” added Kendi.
- ▶ There is a growing need to teach educators how to teach and that educators should learn more about the children that they instruct and become knowledgeable about mental health issues.


Ibram X Kendi (cont).

“One of the things that I think teachers would benefit from is child psychology. It is very difficult for children to express complex emotions. Typically, studies show that across racial groups, that the way complex emotions are expressed is through what we can call misbehavior.”



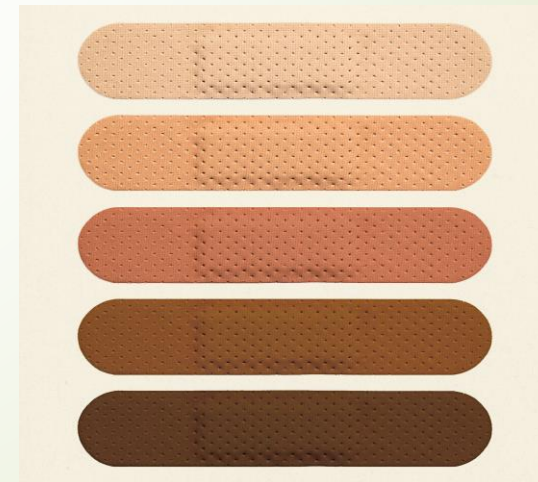


Ibram X Kendi (cont.)

- ▶ Anti-racist educators to focus on the individual and the causes behind rebellious behaviors.
 - ▶ “It is critical for anti-racist educators to not generalize the behavior. When we individualize the behavior, we say, ‘okay this is something happening to this individual. He is not a reflection of any other Black boys in the room, in the school, in the community, in the nation. He is a reflection of himself.’”
 - ▶ Some educators perpetuate these racist ideas.
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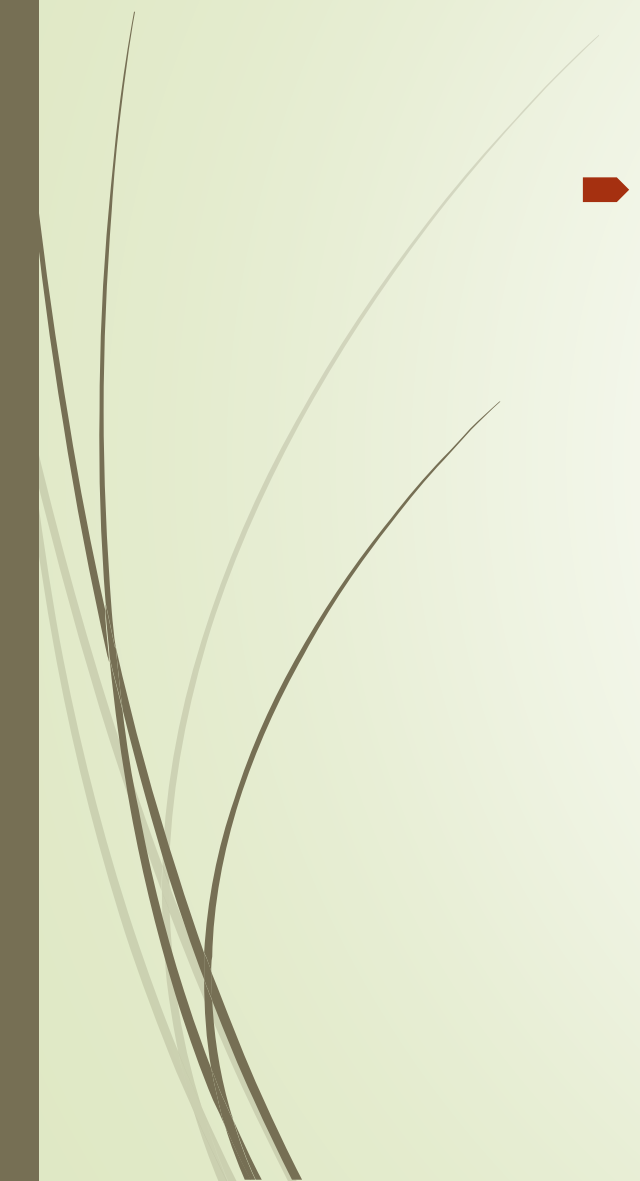
Kendi on Racism and Education

- “Racism is not even six hundred years old,”“It’s a cancer that we’ve caught early.” Kendi suggest the cure will start with policies, not ideas. Just as ideologies of racial difference emerged after the slave trade in order to justify it, antiracist ideologies will emerge once we are bold enough to enact an antiracist agenda: criminal-justice reform, more money for black schools and black teachers, a program to fight residential segregation.





Critical Race Theory

- ▶ The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step by step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism and principles of constitutional law.
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Racial Equity in Schools

- ▶ Systemic and institutional racism are also interchanged, but school and district leaders should note that *institutional* racism focuses on unfair practices or policies within and between institutions—such as discipline policies in schools—that disproportionately impact people of color. Systemic racism includes institutional racism but takes it further by examining the historical, cultural, and social factors in the unequal power, access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes between white and racial minority groups.

Catherine Kelley, How school and district leaders can address systemic racism with their communities

Racial Equity in Schools

- ▶ Many perceive racism as being *individual* racism—the conscious prejudice, hate, or bias against people based on race—and therefore underestimate the continued strength and prevalence of racism in the everyday lives of people of color.



Catherine Kelley, How school and district leaders can address systemic racism with their communities



Racial Equity Policy

SYSTEMIC CHANGE Race and Equity

- Equity: The distribution of resources that takes into account past history and current position, so that future outcomes are fairly distributed.
- Prioritize eliminating racial disparity and disproportionality in all aspects of our educational system.
- Places Race at the center
- Equity in Systems and Operations • Develop and strategically use a race and equity decision-making tool • Collect, analyze, use and share disaggregated data, as legally allowable, with a race and equity lens • Identify barriers and transform practices, including assessment, which lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as but not limited to... -- special education – discipline



Racial Equity Policy

- ▶ Equity in Systems and Operations • Identify barriers and transform practices, including assessment, which lead to the under-representation in programs such as, but not limited to Highly Capable, Honors, accelerated, and Advanced Placement courses • Recognizing and empowering under-represented families of color as essential partners so that all students are successful • Commit to equitable budgetary alignment
- ▶ Workforce Equity • Formally and informally recognizing the value of a diverse workforce • Make appropriate efforts within existing legal frameworks to Recruit, hire, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse staff
- ▶ Opportunity Gap: Acknowledges that there are still structural issues with institutionalized racism, disparate educational opportunities, and different treatment experienced by students of color. More specifically, opportunity gap refers to inputs— the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities.



Racial Equity Policy

- ▶ **Institutional Bias:** The failure to provide appropriate services or access to a group of people because of their race, color, culture. This may be seen in the practices, processes, systems, attitudes, behaviors, or by looking at the results of the organization. This is beyond individual acts of prejudice and is likely built into the organization's systems.
- ▶ **Institutional Racism:** Structures, policies, precedents, systems, and formal and informal practices that operate and are manipulated to allow, support, or deprive racial groups a chance to have equal access or opportunity to acquire wealth and social standing in a society. Those with wealth are dependent, in part, upon the racial groups they deprive to maintain their standing



Racial Equity Policy

- ▶ Among the goals for the district to accomplish by 2020, the plans calls for:
 - ▶ Reducing the suspension rates of students of color by 10 percent;
 - ▶ Decreasing the achievement gap in proficiency rates between African American and white students by 3 percent;
 - ▶ Increasing the number of minority teachers by 2 percent;
 - ▶ Increasing students of color enrolled in higher level courses by 3 percent, and those participating in career pathways and graduating transition ready by 5 percent; and
 - ▶ Providing funding of at least \$2 million on initiatives focused on students of color.
- ▶ To hit those benchmarks, the plan outlines numerous strategies, including ensuring that each school has systems in place to support students in becoming transition ready, so they are well prepared to advance to the next grade level; providing extensive training opportunities for staff in a wide variety of areas, such as cultural competence, restorative practices and trauma-informed care, to help reduce disproportionality in disciplinary practices; and offering support programs and services tailored to better serve students of color and other marginalized groups.

Concepts of Racial Equity

WE STRUGGLE OVER THE MEANINGS OF RACE AND EQUALITY

WE PREFER TO ADDRESS THE SYMPTOMS RATHER THAN THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

WE ARE GENERALLY MORE COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING CLASS AND GENDER

WE OFTEN FAIL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAYS THAT RACE HAS BEEN A **FUNDAMENTAL AXIS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

WE ARE OFTEN **RELUCTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGACIES OF RACE**

THEY RESONATE WITH **OUR DEEPLY HELD BELIEFS ABOUT 'SUCCESS' AND 'FAILURE'**



References

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