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“A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?”
George Washington

Florida Rejects Math Textbooks with CRT Content

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) recently [announced](#) the rejection of certain mathematics textbooks for public schools, charging the textbooks did not meet Florida’s Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards or “contained prohibited topics.” A total of 54 out of 132 textbooks submitted by publishers for review (41%) were deemed “impermissible,” citing the problems of inclusion of Critical Race Theory concepts and Common Core as well as the “unsolicited addition of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in mathematics.” According to statistics provided by the FDOE, textbooks for grades K–5 had the highest incidence of the prohibited topics, with 71% of these textbooks rejected; only 20% of materials were rejected for grades 6–8 and 35% rejected for grades 9–12. Governor Ron DeSantis stated, “It seems that some publishers attempted to slap a coat of paint on an old house built on the foundation of Common Core, and indoctrinating concepts like race essentialism, especially, bizarrely, for elementary school students.” When broken down by issues, 28 textbooks (21%) were rejected because of the inclusion of prohibited topics, 12 textbooks (9%) did not meet the state’s B.E.S.T. Standards, and 14 textbooks (11%) did not meet the B.E.S.T. Standards and also contained prohibited topics. The FDOE reviews textbooks [every five years](#); and in 2021, the FDOE [communicated to publishers](#) that any submitted textbooks must meet the state’s standards and be free of “unsolicited strategies, such as social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching.” Florida’s Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran stated, “We’re going to ensure that Florida has the highest-quality instructional materials aligned to our nationally-recognized standards. . . . When it comes to education, other states continue to follow Florida’s lead as we continue to reinforce parents’ rights by focusing on providing their children with a world-class education without the fear of indoctrination or exposure to dangerous and divisive concepts in our classrooms.”

The effort to include Critical Race Theory in math instruction is a trend that has been developing over the last few years, according to Jonathan Butcher, education expert at the Heritage Foundation. In a recent article by the Daily Caller News Foundation, Butcher [explained](#), “Critical pedagogy is the application of critical race theory to teaching, and research from this field shows that critical ideas are being used to shape the hard sciences and math, as well as literature and history. Even math is being refocused away from numeracy and technical skills to so-called social justice issues that actually defend discrimination.” In the state of Georgia, an effort was underway to implement an “equity plan” into mathematics classrooms that would eliminate any grouping of students by ability and focus more on equitable outcomes, using “culturally responsive teaching.” However, the state’s education superintendent Richard Woods has halted the efforts and is working with the state legislature to advance policies that will prohibit instruction that advances divisive topics such as Critical Race Theory. A [bill](#) is currently before the state legislature that would limit the funding for schools that teach that “the United States is a systemically racist country.”

Biden Administration Goes After Charter Schools

The Biden administration recently [proposed a new rule](#) that would restrict school choice by making it harder for charter schools to operate. In 2015, Congress created the Charter Schools Program to fund the expansion of charter schools. The Department of Education's proposed rule would [require](#) charter schools to show that they meet "unmet demand" from "over-enrollment of existing public schools" in order to get Charter Schools Program funding. It also includes a requirement that charter schools "not otherwise increase racial or socio-economic segregation" in public schools, even though many charter schools serve minority communities in urban areas. The proposed rule would also force charter schools to collaborate with public school districts, effectively giving the public school district veto power over charter schools, which often stand in direct competition to traditional public schools. A 2020 [study](#) by Corey DeAngelis and Christian Barnard at the CATO Institute found that the competition that school choice provides actually leads to the improvement of the education offered by traditional public schools. [Other studies](#) also show that school choice programs improve test scores at public schools. Yet, the Department of Education's proposed rule would limit the ability of new charter schools to open and of existing charter schools to continue operating, thus countering the purpose of the Charter Schools Program and ultimately hurting the students who would otherwise benefit from opportunities provided by school choice. The Department of Education is reviewing over 15,000 public comments as it finalizes the rule.

Court Rules in Favor of Professor's Free Speech and Religious Liberty

Philosophy professor Dr. Nick Meriwether at Shawnee State University has finally had his religious liberty and free speech [vindicated](#) after the college agreed to settle its case against him. In 2018, the college issued a written warning to Meriwether after a male student complained that Dr. Meriwether refused to use feminine pronouns to address him in class. A Christian, Dr. Meriwether believes that each person is made in the image of God and designed as either male or female. He objected to referring to a man by feminine pronouns and politely declined to follow the student's request, instead suggesting that he use the student's preferred name. The college [refused](#) to compromise and issued him a written warning, saying that he "created a hostile work environment" by not affirming the student's gender identity. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and Dr. Meriwether appealed the case to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled in March 2021 in favor of Dr. Meriwether's First Amendment rights to speak according to his conscience. This month, Dr. Meriwether's case officially closed when the college agreed to pay \$400,000 in attorney's fees and damages for violating Dr. Meriwether's constitutional rights. ADF Senior Counsel Tyson Langhofer said of the case, "Public universities should welcome intellectual and ideological diversity, where all students and professors can engage in meaningful discussions without compromising their core beliefs We commend the university for ultimately agreeing to do the right thing, in keeping with its reason for existence as a marketplace of ideas."

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACIS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America's Children](#)

[Angry Parents = Better Schools](#)

[Heritage Foundation Launches "Transition" Project to Set Conservative Policy Agenda](#)