

Key Points of Information

CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN SCHOOLS



Public School Defenders Hub 2023

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- Opponents erroneously claim that CRT (Critical Race Theory) asserts all white people are oppressors and all Black people and people of color are oppressed victims.
- CRT does not attribute racism to white people as individuals or even to entire groups of people
- CRT indicates how some systems have been impacted by racism (e.g., the criminal justice system, education system, labor market, housing market, and health care system)

- Some critics of CRT consider any discussion of race, equity, diversity, or ethnic studies as equivalent to CRT.
- Ethnic studies predates CRT and began in the 1960s as an attempt to correct the lack of representation of all American peoples.
- Misrepresentation and neglect of indigenous peoples and people of color need to be corrected by providing better representation of the experiences, contributions, culture, art, and politics of groups whose stories were typically overlooked or underrepresented in the curriculum.
- Ethnic studies aims to build a greater appreciation, understanding, and respect among students from different backgrounds.
- Opponents view ethnic studies as radical, divisive, anti-white or un-American while supporters maintain that ethnic studies courses improve student outcomes, critical thinking, self-esteem and student engagement while increasing connections among students of different backgrounds.
- One of the leading papers on ethnic studies, [The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum](#), indicates that participation in ethnic studies can reduce dropout rates and improve student achievement, and that "culturally relevant teaching, when implemented in a supportive, high-fidelity context, can support at-risk students' achievement.

2

- CRT is often confused with Culturally Relevant Teaching or Ethnic Studies.
- Culturally Relevant Teaching or pedagogy aims to nurture student learning by supporting students' intellectual growth, moral development, and ability to reason and problem-solve.
- Culturally Relevant Teaching encourages students to acquire Cultural competence, to affirm and appreciate their culture of origin while developing fluency in at least one other culture.
- Culturally Relevant Teaching also helps develop Critical consciousness to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems, especially those that result in societal inequalities.

3

- Ballotpedia covered 340 recall efforts against 773 school board members between 2006 and December 18, 2020.
- About 30% of those recall efforts reached the ballot, and 18.6% of targeted school board members were removed from office through the recall process
- In 2021 alone, Ballotpedia tracked school board recall efforts against 237 board members. The school board recall success rate was 0.42%

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Scholars who have applied CRT to education have identified examples of racial inequality in schools such as:

- Ongoing segregation within and across school districts
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- Inadequate resources and facilities in predominantly African American and Latino school districts
- Disproportionate discipline of African American and other groups of students
- Narrow assessments that provide inaccurate measures of student ability and achievement
- Barriers to advanced classes, gifted programs, and selective schools
- Curriculum that neglects the contributions and experiences of non-dominant groups

In essence, researchers who use CRT to study education evaluate how certain practices can contribute to racial inequality and seek and advocate for potential solutions.

Source Citations

- [Board members must keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus](#)
- <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>
- <http://blog.csba.org/faq-ethnic-studies/>
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