



Jordan School District #717
Workshop Meeting Agenda

Monday, August 23, 2021 at 6:30 PM
Workshop Meeting
CERC Multi-purpose Room
500 Sunset Drive; Suite 3
Jordan, MN 55352

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1. Student Support Update and Discussion

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Student Support Update and Discussion

Educational Equity
At Jordan Public Schools

JORDAN

The Why?

The board, teachers, staff, leadership team, and members of the school community are getting questions about Jordan's Equity Education framework and our district support for all students. Consequently, it is crucial to review and discuss this important work as we move into the new school year.

Objectives:

- Review who we are as a district- what is our mission?
- Equity, Equality and Inclusion - what is it and how does it look in our schools?
- What does outcomes vs opportunities mean?
- What is Critical Race Theory vs. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?

Mission of Jordan Public Schools

Jordan's focus is on understanding ALL students and connecting with ALL students to **“Inspire a Caring Community to Ignite Learning, Innovation, and Success for All.”**

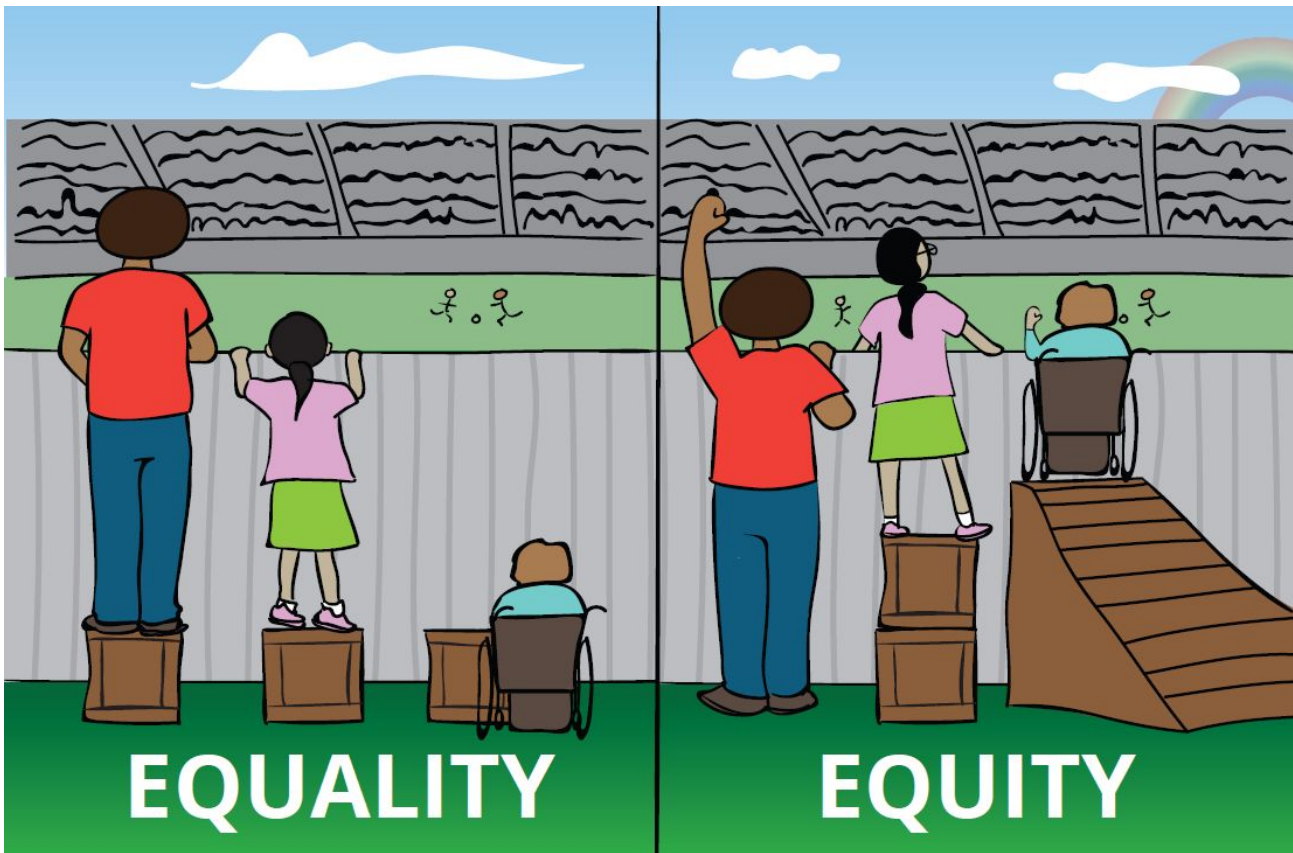
Equity Education

The educational equity work that was established in the district years ago remains essential in the learning environment to help remove barriers so that every single student has the resources and opportunities needed to succeed.

Why is Equity Education Important?

All students are not the same, and what one student needs to grow is different from another student -- this is the focus of equity.

- To meet the needs of all these students with different backgrounds, learning needs, future goals, and experiences, Jordan Public Schools focuses our equity work on connecting with and supporting all our unique learners.
- Every student deserves access to schools that are safe, welcoming, and affirming.
- Jordan Public Schools will continue to strive every single day to provide that atmosphere for ALL our students.



Outcomes and Opportunities

This MDE quote that is noted on the Jordan Equity webpage was referenced recently:

"Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in systems of education allowing all students access to **opportunities** to learn and develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented **opportunity** and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational **opportunities** requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome. Equity is different from equality. Equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level." (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018)



Outcomes and Opportunities

- The word outcomes is to be looked at broadly.
 - An outcome could be that ALL students have access to schools that are safe, welcoming, and affirming.
- A narrow view of this would be concerning and unrealistic.
 - Each student has unique needs and abilities.
- The word opportunities is most representative of Jordan Public Schools.

Jordan Public Schools strives to ensure all students have opportunities they need to be successful!

What is Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

**How is it Different from
Culturally Responsive (Teaching)
Pedagogy?**

The Narrative on Critical Race Theory

In recent months, the topic of Critical Race Theory being taught in K-12 education started garnering headlines and fervent discussion at the state and national level.

- We are aware of concerns regarding Critical Race Theory and the potential to “...create division among students and staff, that students could be singled out based on their identities and that they would learn a skewed version of American history that presents the nation as fundamentally racist and white supremacist” (Anderson, 2021).
- Moreover, some view Critical Race Theory as a means of shaming white teachers and students for being a part of oppression.

What is Critical Race Theory?

- Critical Race Theory is a perspective; it is a theory; it is a verb; it is a lens to analyze through; it is a practice that puts race at the center of critical analysis (Rothmayr, 1999).
- Critical race theory (CRT) is a discipline and analytical tool that began in law schools in the 1970s as a tool to help law students think critically about the impact of historical and present-day racism on the legal system. In the 1990s, some colleges started using CRT to help aspiring law students better understand inequalities with the goal of improving performance.
- Placing race at the center of analysis, Critical Race Theory scholars interrogate policies and practices that are taken for granted to uncover the overt and covert ways that racist ideologies, structures, and institutions create and maintain racial inequality.

Critical Race Theory Is NOT...

The term Critical Race Theory has been misinterpreted as referring to any sort of attempts to teach Diversity or Equity.

- Teaching history from multiple perspectives; that is CRITICAL THINKING, not Critical Race Theory.
- Discussing race and racism as a part of the curriculum; that is CRITICAL THINKING, not Critical Race Theory.
- Focusing on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; that is BEST PRACTICE.

How are Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Different?



Culturally Responsive (Teaching) Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is a research-based approach that makes meaningful connections between what students learn in school and their cultures, preferences, and life experiences. These connections help ALL students access rigorous curriculum, develop higher-level academic skills, and see the relevance between what they learn at school and their lives.

- **Understanding students' lives can help teachers foster a sense of belonging and ensure that all students feel respected and challenged.**
- **Perspectives, diversity, critical thinking, etc. -- these are all foundational elements in Jordan's vision of Culturally Responsive Learning.**
- **Allowing all students to feel safe and supported in their learning environment by responding to each student's interests, knowledge, and background.**

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has been a district focus for many years to help foster an inclusive pedagogy that meets the needs -- academic, social, and emotional -- of ALL students. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is research based and a quality framework for all learners focused on teachers' strategies and practices -- instructional techniques, instructional materials, relationships, classroom climate, and self awareness. **At its core, Culturally**

Responsive Pedagogy comes down to the 4Rs -- Rigor for ALL, Relevance for ALL, Relationships with ALL, and Results for ALL.

The logo for Jordan, featuring the word "JORDAN" in a stylized, bold, italicized font with a red-to-yellow gradient and a black outline.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a Requirement in Teaching Licensure

Tiered Licensure in Minnesota

2020 Licensure Renewal Categories:

- 125 Hours Total for a Tier 4 License
 - Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies
 - Reading Preparation
 - Key Warning Signs for Early-Onset Mental Illness in Childhood and Adolescence
 - English Learners
 - Cultural Competency

Note: Minnesota Administrative Rule for Clock Hours; Requirements for Renewal of Professional Licenses. **Administrative Rules 8710.7200** (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8710.7200>)

Cultural Competency Requirement

PELSB Requirement

- Cultural Competency: Effective for all tiered license renewals in 2020 and thereafter, training that promotes self-reflection and discussion including, but not limited to the following topics: racial, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; American Indian and Alaskan native students; religion; systemic racism; gender identity, including transgender students; sexual orientation; language diversity; and individuals with disabilities and mental health concerns. Training programs must be designed to deepen teachers' understanding of their own frames of reference, the potential bias in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with students, students' families, and the school communities ([PELSB 2020](#)).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Vs. Critical Race Theory

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- In Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, race is one point of focus; it is not the only focus. Race is a single aspect of a student's culture; this is a fundamental and important difference between Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.
- Discussions of race and privilege may, should, and will arise in the curriculum; for example, it is impossible to teach key points of history like The Civil Rights Movement without these discussions. However, nowhere in the district's curriculum is the specific teaching of race as the only lens of analysis.
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy does not teach that individuals are inherently responsible for actions committed in the past by members of a "like" group.
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy does not divide; it does the opposite. It provides a space for all students to be seen, appreciated, celebrated, and affirmed for who they are as individuals.
- **As a district, we do not focus on race as a permeating factor in all that we teach and do. We support the whole student.**

An Important Clarification...

The acronym between Culturally Responsive Teaching and Critical Race Theory is the same -- CRT.

- This has created additional confusion.
- Consequently, when discussing the district's focus on Culturally Responsive (Teaching) Pedagogy, it is important to be clear in language to avoid confusion.
- The District's website has updated its language to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to offer clarification and transparency.

Support Structures for Educational Equity

Jordan Public Schools have many stakeholders that support educational equity across the district:

- **Achievement and Integration:** Equity Outreach Specialist, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Specialist, REACH Instructors, and AIPAC Coordinator
- **Administrative and District Leaders:** Principals, Superintendent, Jordan School Board, District Directors
- **Educational Partners:** Parents, Curriculum and Technology Advisory Council, Teachers, Targeted Services, Paraprofessionals, SEAC, AIPAC, College Partners, etc.
- **Board Policy and Legislation:** Board Policy; State and Federal Legislation

What are the equity strategies and tools used to support all students?

STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUPS

- Diversity Leadership Crew Jr's (Elementary School)
- Diversity Leadership Crew (Middle School)
- Equity Leadership Crew (High School)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Student led "Activity Night"
- "International Dinner and Talent Show"
- Eagle Feather Banquet
- American Indian Parent Advisory Council (AIPAC)
- Curriculum and Technology Advisory Council
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Caring and Committed Conversations
- HARAMBEE
- Tutoring
- Camps and Additional Learning Opportunities
- READO

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“All students are seen, heard, and represented in the learning environment.”

The logo for Jordan features the word "JORDAN" in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a yellow-to-orange gradient and have a thick, dark red outline, giving it a three-dimensional, metallic appearance.

Where do WE go from here?

The **important** and **necessary** equity work being done by Jordan Public Schools was defined long before current discussions of Critical Race Theory began, and this work is separate from the current national and statewide dialogue about Critical Race Theory.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has been and will continue to be a district focus for many years to help foster an inclusive pedagogy that meets the needs -- academic, social, and emotional -- of ALL students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is research based and a quality framework for all learners focused on teachers' strategies and practices -- instructional techniques, instructional materials, relationships, classroom climate, and self awareness.

**** Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not a district approved part of the curriculum at Jordan Public Schools.** Critical Race Theory is just that – a theory. It is a perspective; it is a verb; it is a lens to analyze through; it is a practice that puts race at the center of critical analysis, which was developed in the realm of legal studies in the 1960s (Rothmayr, 1999). Moreover, Critical Race Theory is not included in the Minnesota Department of Education's K-12 Standards and is not taught in our schools.

References

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- Price, P.G. (2016). Critical race theory. Retrieved from: <http://education.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-1?print=pdf>.
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- Seelal, M., Pinn, S., Kramer, S., & Costanzo, S. (Hosts). (2021, February 27). Critical Race Theory (No. 4) [Audio podcast episode]. In *Discriminology*. Apple Podcasts.

