



**COLUMBUS
CITY SCHOOLS**

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Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

State and Local Government Committee
House Bill 322 Opponent Testimony
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Thank you Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local Government Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 322. My name is Kyra Schloenbach and I am the Chief Academic Officer at the Columbus City School District.

The Academic Services Office of Columbus City Schools believes that we are obligated to teach a comprehensive history. Education should be balanced and it is important we facilitate discussions around race, racism, and other inequalities in a way that students feel safe and can exhibit agency. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an advanced concept that is not taught in CCS and does not align to the Ohio Learning Standards.

To address the concerns that arise from controversial content, of which Critical Race Theory is part, the Academic Services Team relied heavily on the adopted School Board Policy 2240 governing Controversial Issues. It defines a controversial issue as:

A controversial issue is a topic:

- A. On which opposing points of view have been widely communicated through responsible discourse and opinion.
- B. Likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.

The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program:

- A. Is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students;
- B. Does not encourage or support the harassment and/or endangerment of people, or destruction of any public or private property;
- C. Encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry.

The core function of our curriculum and instruction is to ensure the Ohio Learning Standards are delivered to all students so that they are prepared for high school graduation and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community. CRT is not in the Ohio Learning Standards.

Some CCS course curricula, however, including core electives, career and technical education courses, College Credit Plus, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, are based on national curriculum standards and frameworks. For these courses, Academic Services applies the CCS Board of Education policy on Controversial Topics to ensure alignment to local, state, and national legislation and educational requirements. To be clear, CRT is not part of these national standards or requirements either.

Furthermore, we are committed to adopting resources that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and establish a psychologically safe and rigorous educational environment accessible to all students.

As we regularly update our curricular resources, we will guarantee the following:

1. Alignment to Ohio Learning Standards or the guiding standards outlined by national associations as necessary.
2. The use of a curriculum equity rubric to account for implicit bias.
3. Yearly peer review systems, ensuring fidelity, current content, and structural consistency.

As a public school district, it is our responsibility to provide a curriculum that allows a complete rendering of our history, delivered in an open, supportive, culturally responsive and psychologically safe environment for all students. Just as CCS BOE has an adopted, Controversial Issue policy that supports all students, and not a select few - all local boards of education should have the authority to develop similar guardrails to not only protect their constituents but to also empower strong standards-aligned instruction.

By adhering to the Ohio Learning Standards and board policy, these pieces of legislation are unnecessary and an example of state overreach.

Lastly, I'd like to share a personal experience from the time I was selected as a delegate to Buckeye Girls State at Ashland University. This life changing program illustrates how when students are able to participate in safe debate, exchange points of view, and are guided by a dedicated group of citizens, they learn and can fully comprehend and harness the power of the democracy in which our republic was built. I urge you to vote no on these pieces of legislation.

Once again, thank you Chairman Wiggam and the members of the State and Local Committee for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 322. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kyra Schloenbach
Chief Officer, Academic Services