



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on December 16, 2021

“Are You Anti-racist?” School Districts Screening Teacher Candidates for “Progressive” Values

Hundreds of school systems across the country are implementing screening systems for teacher candidates to make sure they are “anti-racist” and have progressive views on gender and sexuality.

Education Week [reported](#) last week that some 500 school districts have partnered with [Nimble](#), a teacher-hiring company that uses artificial intelligence to determine applicants’ “cultural competency” by examining their applications and answers during the interview process, as well as their references and “any other artifacts.”



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Much like the rest of the progressive newspeak, “cultural competency” is a relatively new concept [developed](#) within the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and apparently [means](#) the “ability to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds,” meaning that a teacher must view students through a racial and “cultural” lens and treat them accordingly.

The concept appears to be important enough that the American Psychological Association [lists it](#) as one of the “core competencies” for psychology professionals today, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is [recognizing](#) the “need to enhance” “cultural competence” skills of government agencies in order to improve health services for America’s racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse population as a way to tackle the “structural racism” that puts non-white citizens at a disadvantage, per the CDC.

Sure enough, such a “valuable” tool has been promoted in education, too. After all, it is hard to overestimate the role of a teacher in a student’s life. And if a teacher only believes in two genders and supports the idea that people should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin, then such a teacher might not be even hired thanks to the new screening system.

Education Week writes,

[Teachers’ racial biases](#) result in [lowered expectations for students of color](#), [discriminatory disciplinary practices](#), and curricula [that don’t represent students’ cultures](#).

To weed out candidates with “racial biases,” schools are asking candidates if they are racist and are attempting to “diversify” their workforce, i.e., hiring less white teachers.

While the schools, especially ones in urban areas, have been asking candidates questions about “cultural competency” for at least the last five to 10 years, the issue became especially hot after the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, per Lauren Dachele, the founder and CEO of Nimble.

“Now that we’ve become a little more aware of the concept of anti-racism and maybe a little more woke



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as a culture, I do think that districts have started to emphasize these questions a little bit more,” Dachille told Education Week.

For example, in Boston, principal Ashley Davis of Shaw Elementary School asks candidates “what they’ve done personally or professionally to be more anti-racist,” or “how they ensure that the values of diversity and cultural awareness are reflected in their practice.” Davis looks for the candidates who would give her concrete examples from their practice in order to separate windbags from true “anti-racists.”

Montgomery County, the largest school district in Maryland, has begun asking teacher applicants questions such as:

How do you incorporate gender diversity and the different racial and cultural backgrounds of your students and families into your daily instruction and classroom environment? How do you connect with the backgrounds of your students? And how do you ensure that student outcomes are not predictable by race, ethnicity, culture, gender, or sexual orientation?

Alex Moseman, the director of talent acquisition for an Indianapolis school district, said that since 80 percent of the district’s students “identify as Black, Hispanic, multiracial, or an ethnicity other than white” and mostly come from low-income families, “We want hiring managers to have a baseline about where a candidate is starting from in terms of [his or her] mindset about race.”

Therefore, a candidate is typically asked, “Why do you think that low-income students predictably perform lower on standardized tests than their more-affluent peers?”

The question avoids the topic of race, yet the school wants a candidate to connect a student’s non-white race to his “disadvantaged” economic situation. Candidates who don’t make that connection are considered as having a “deficit mindset” on the issue, and won’t be hired.

Sometimes candidates will say all the “right things,” such as mentioning “equity” and “justice,” but will not talk about race explicitly. That’s fine, Moseman believes, since the school administration will train teachers to be comfortable in viewing students as representatives of their races eventually, and “that’s where [they] can grow as an employee.”

Sharif El-Mekki, founder and CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, stresses that hiring “anti-racist” teachers is important to prevent teachers of color from leaving schools, which they often do due to the “microaggressions and racist stereotypes” from their colleagues, per El-Mekki. He stated that administrators should hire “candidates who had both the courage to hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for the success of students of color and the humility to interrogate their own mindsets about race.” He believes it would be “helpful” to ask candidates if they “ever worked for a Black administrator before.” Candidates who are uncomfortable talking about “race, class, and privilege” are out.

While the report admits that schools have been struggling with teacher hires for the last couple of years, it also emphasizes that school administrators should not “compromise on values” and only hire those who share their Marxist worldview.



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