

October 22, 2021



## Board of Education

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## Clarkstown Central School District

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*Dear Clarkstown Community,*

*The following remarks were shared by the CCSD Board of Education during last night's regularly scheduled meeting at Clarkstown High School South.*

Good evening Clarkstown parents, students and residents.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to take a moment to clarify ambiguities relating to the status of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in the Clarkstown Central School District.

It had been previously announced that we have paused development of new district-led equity initiatives at this time.

In fact, the process to develop equity initiatives never actually started.

When guidance came down from the New York State Education Department last spring to initiate a policy on diversity, equity and inclusion, our first step would have been to form a districtwide equity committee.

The Board of Education recognized that it had to identify a variety of community members to create a truly representative committee - including different ages, ethnic and racial groups, religious beliefs, personal backgrounds and divergent points-of-view.

It was decided that we would hire an independent consultant who would assist in forming this committee and navigating our district through the process of building consensus to develop Clarkstown's equity initiative.

With the departure of Superintendent Cox, the Board made the decision to STOP the development of all new equity initiatives until a new school leader is identified and appointed.

It would be unfair to have a new superintendent implement an initiative they did not develop - in collaboration with the Board of Education and our school community.

No curriculum or other program changes have or will be made until our equity initiative is developed - under new district leadership.

In the meantime, we are seeing a growing concern across our nation, in our state, and now in our town - especially on social media - that CCSD is teaching Critical Race Theory - CRT.

With misinformation and misunderstanding fueling the discussion in our district and community, I want to address concerns about CRT head-on.

Simply put, we are not teaching CRT in the Clarkstown Central School District.

CRT has no place in CCSD classrooms.

We believe most parents in our district want their kids to understand the historic path of our nation - and this includes difficult discussions about racism.

As a board, we are committed to ensuring all children thrive and learn to lead in a diverse community and nation.

It's all about understanding different experiences - and respecting one another.

But, let's be clear: this approach is NOT Critical Race Theory.

Additionally, the Board of Education does NOT want the term CRT to be used as a catch-all phrase for all things related to the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and practices - as set forth by the New York State Board of Regents.

Until a new superintendent is appointed, CCSD will fully support existing policies and programs which we believe successfully address our day-to-day issues.

The district has a strong anti-bullying policy, a strong Code of Conduct, as well as robust "No Place for Hate" and CANDLE programs. We also have trained and capable staff in-place to comply with New York State DASA laws.

The CCSD Board of Education remains committed to educating and supporting students who are critical thinkers, capable of being successful in a rapidly changing, complex and diverse society.

We are committed to educating our students, *not indoctrinating them*.

All subjects should be taught age appropriately, factually, and with fidelity, no matter how controversial the topic.

Students should never know the opinion of their teachers on emotionally-charged subjects. All politics must stop at the front door of our buildings.

The Clarkstown Central School District is known - nationwide - for high expectations and excellence.

Any initiative adopted by this Board will support this reputation.

Thank you for your partnership in supporting our children, our schools and our community.

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