

Amendment 21.1078.0100

Chairman Weisz, Chairman Lee and members of the Joint Technical Corrections Committee

I am Senator Mike Wobbema from District 24

I have submitted my testimony and the requested amendment and supporting information online.

There is no question that questionable issues relating to what is taught in the classrooms in these United States of America, and in North Dakota in particular have reached a pitch that we have not seen before. The attempts to rewrite history and who we are have been taken to an extreme length. Of critical importance is the level that this re-write is being pushed into the public school system.

Representative Kasper introduced this bill to address the dangerous discussion in our public school system of critical race theory. I request that you consider this bill favorably, but also favorably consider amendment 21.1078.01003 that inserts a further restriction to the training of our educators in this material.

It should come as no surprise that if our school system presents information to our teachers in any type of training or informational sessions, that the information presented will be received at implied approval of the information, and that it will therefore find it introduced into the classroom. I believe that we need to further insulate our children from this information as best we can, and request this amendment be adopted as a way to keep this from reaching our public school system in the first place.

I will stand for any questions.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1508

Page 1, line 2, after "of" insert ", and professional development training in,"

Page 1, line 7, after "Curriculum" insert "and training"

Page 1, after line 7 insert "1."

Page 1, after line 15, insert:

- "2. A school district or public school may not require a teacher or any other individual employed by the school district or school to participate in diversity or bias training or professional development providing or implying an individual is intrinsically prejudiced against another individual on the basis of the individual's membership of a particular ethnicity, gender, sex, or other protected class."

Renumber accordingly

Introduced by

Representatives Kasper, Becker, B. Koppelman, Meier, Rohr, D. Ruby

Senators Myrdal, Wanzek

(Approved by the Delayed Bills Committee)

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to prohibiting the teaching of and professional development training in.
3 critical race theory in public schools; and to provide an effective date.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Curriculum and training - Critical race theory - Prohibited.**

8 1. Each school district and public school shall ensure instruction of its curriculum is
9 factual and objective. A school district or public school may not include instruction
10 relating to critical race theory in any portion of the district's required curriculum under
11 sections 15.1-21-01 or 15.1-21-02, or any other curriculum offered by the district or
12 school. For purposes of this section, "critical race theory" means the theory that racism
13 is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but that racism is systemically
14 embedded in American society and the American legal system to facilitate racial
15 inequality. The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to govern this
16 section.

17 2. A school district or public school may not require a teacher or any other individual
18 employed by the school district or school to participate in diversity or bias training or
19 professional development providing or implying an individual is intrinsically prejudiced
20 against another individual on the basis of the individual's membership of a particular
21 ethnicity, gender, sex, or other protected class.

22 **SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Act becomes effective upon its filing with the
23 secretary of state.



Hope-Page and Valley City Public Schools
Monday, January 18, 2021
Education In-Service Day



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

8:30am- Welcome and Introductions

8:45am- Both Sides of the Story and the Five E's

Keynote Speaker- Dr. Sandy Womack Jr.

9:45am- Break and Transition

10:00am- Diversity at VCHS- Perspectives of Students and Knowing our "Why"

Presenter- Mrs. Angela Van Bruggen

10:30am- Breakout Session #1

- ☐ **Inclusive Language (Elementary)**
 - Presenter- Sharayah Robinson- Green Dot Etc.
- ☐ **Sticks and Stones: Implicit Biases, Microaggressions, and Stereotypes (Secondary)**
 - Presenter- Andrew Montoya- National Education Association

11:30am- Small Group Discussion (Assigned)

12:30pm- Lunch (on your own)

1:30pm- Breakout Session #2

- ☐ **Inclusive Language (Secondary)**
 - Presenter- Sharayah Robinson- Green Dot
- ☐ **Sticks and Stones: Implicit Biases, Microaggressions, and Stereotypes (Elementary)**
 - Presenter- Andrew Montoya- NEA

2:30pm- Break and Transition

2:45pm- Small Group Discussion (Assigned)

3:30pm- Concluding Remarks, Future Action, and In-Service Evaluation

Building Cultural Competence:

Practical Tools for Valley City Public School Staff

We love our students here in Valley City. Without a doubt, every teacher in our district wants every one of our students to feel loved, valued, & accepted for who they are. However, we are all products of our own backgrounds and identities. Our life experiences have shaped who we are and how we do our jobs. There is nothing wrong with that, but the reality is, we are working with students' whose life experiences may be radically different from our own. And to be effective teachers of all students, we owe those students, whether they are from a different race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status, our recognition, our respect, and our understanding. It benefits not only our diverse students, but all students, that we strive to teach with cultural competence in Valley City Public Schools.

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Cultural competence is the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures. Culturally responsive teaching, or cultural intelligence in education, helps create a learning environment that is engaging and accessible to a broader range of students.

WHY DOES IT MATTER IN VALLEY CITY, ND?

With 13% of our district identifying as a non-white racial group, we need to make sure ALL students' identities feel included and valued in our school culture.

Valley City Public School's Demographics

	Jefferson	Washington	Jr High	High School	District
American Indian/Alaska Native	10	6	5	9	30
Asian	4	1	3	4	12
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0	1	1	3
Hispanic	5	15	5	9	34
Black	19	11	4	11	45
White	264	197	165	315	941
Two or more races	7	4	3	4	18
Non-White Total	46- 15%	37- 16%	21- 11%	38- 11%	142- 13%

In addition to this demographic data, we have increasing numbers of students in our district that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer (LGBTQ).

In November 2020, all diverse students in grades 7-12 were given the opportunity to answer a survey to describe their experience at Valley City Public Schools. They were asked to describe experiences they've had that made them feel both included and excluded by VCPS teachers and staff, as well as their peers. [THIS 5-MINUTE VIDEO](#) shares those students' experiences, as well as advice they would give their educators to help them feel more included and supported.

SELF ASSESSMENT OF YOUR CULTURAL COMPETENCE:

The first step to growing your cultural competence is evaluating where you are right now. [CLICK HERE](#) to self-assess your own level of cultural competence. The quiz will generate a score for you, but more important than that number is that you take note of which items you feel comfortable with and which ones made you question yourself. Those are the areas where you could experience growth as a culturally competent educator.

Another option for you to self-assess is to go through the following checklist and think about your growth areas:

- ☐ **Are you aware of your own cultural bias and behavior?** In order to be open to other cultures, we need to have an understanding of our own culture and how it has affected us. You're constantly immersed in your own culture, and it's easy to become numb to how it's affecting your behavior as an educator. Understand what makes your culture unique, so you can also appreciate the differences in others.
- ☐ **Are you ready to challenge any assumptions or stereotypes that you may hold?** Are you aware of the assumptions you may hold about people from other cultures or ? Let go of any stereotypes you may have been holding and encourage an open mind for yourself and your students. This is not an instant process, but consistency is key and will pay off in the long run.
- ☐ **Can you acknowledge how culture impacts the daily life and activities of students?** Your hobbies, daily routine, preferred entertainment, job - there's an endless list of things that culture affects every day. Are you accepting and willing to learn to understand how a student that recently immigrated from another country seems to be struggling with the school routine? Bear in mind that a student's culture can affect their everyday life, through religious commitments or simply their daily schedule. Although you may not understand or be aware, it's important to recognize that a student may be used to spending their day differently.
- ☐ **Can you understand how cultural norms influence communication?** Did you know that in Japan, direct eye contact is seen as a sign of disrespect? Or that sitting cross-legged is considered offensive in Ghana and Turkey? Students from different cultures communicate in many different ways and it's important to acknowledge that some forms of communication may be very different from yours. Rather than perceiving these negatively, use these cultural differences as a learning opportunity rather than passing judgment.

- ☐ **Do you make an effort to learn about other cultures?** You cannot become culturally competent if you don't learn about other cultures. Ask questions and be open to hearing stories rather than making assumptions. This is a perfect opportunity for students to teach you something, in turn!
- ☐ **Can you effectively intervene when you see a student behaving in a discriminatory manner?** Teachers must be able to identify when conversations in the classroom have taken a wrong turn, and be able to defuse the situation. As someone in a leadership role in the classroom, teachers should quickly address derogatory comments and use the situation as a teachable moment for their students.
- ☐ **Are your teaching styles adaptable to students of different cultures?** Are your lessons structured to be understood by students of many cultures? Now more than ever, teachers will likely be teaching students from many different nationalities and cultures. Does it seem like students in your class who are relatively new to the country are struggling with grasping concepts? Teaching styles that may be easy to follow for one student may be totally foreign to another.
- ☐ **Do you allow for communication between you and your students' families?** Family can obviously have a huge impact on a child's behavior and interactions with others. Establish open communication with families and educate them on what their child will be doing in school, and take this as a chance to learn from them as well.

Remember, cultural competence is a continually-evolving practice and is something you continue to learn over the entirety of your teaching career. Cultural competency in schools is more than achievable, and the change starts with teachers who want to make their classroom a welcoming place for all students.

5 PRACTICES TO INCREASE CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

1. ASSESS YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR.

- **Take a self-assessment.** If you haven't used the two options above, go back and see where you place yourself on the continuum of cultural competence.
- **Recognize your own biases.** Take time to learn about your own culture and whether that influences your biases. Then consider, if you had a child that was of a minority religious or ethnic group in their classroom, how would you want their identity to be honored by the classroom teacher and school? Does that perspective-taking change your thinking?

2. GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS.

- **Find out each of your students' cultural backgrounds.** As part of your first day/week of school "Getting to know you" forms, in addition to questions about their favorite sports, pets, etc., include questions about their race, ethnicity, language(s), & religion. Be clear that asking these questions allows students to share their cultural identities with you so you can honor what makes them special and recognize holidays and events that are important to them and their families.

- **Ask about and explore students' cultures.** If possible, talk with the student one-on-one to get to know their background without doing it in front of the entire class. It will be time well-spent. Knowing and understanding the backgrounds of all of your students allows you to build connections between what you are teaching in school and what students experience outside of school.

3. **MAKE YOUR CLASSROOM A JUDGMENT-FREE ZONE.**

- **Encourage and model respectful behavior.** If a student is disrespectful in any way, intervene and immediately address the situation. Students will follow the lead of teachers to know what behavior and language is acceptable and so we must be intentional and use inclusive terminology when describing ethnic, racial, or LGBT groups. For a guide to inclusive terminology from the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), click [HERE](#).
- **Consider displaying a Safe Space sticker, poster, or desktop wallpaper in your classroom.** This communicates to LGBT students that you are an ally and have taken the time to educate yourself about the LGBT community and want to be inclusive. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) provides a [SAFE SPACES KIT](#) that provides information for teachers on how to be an effective ally to your LGBT students. For a Safe Space desktop wallpaper for display on your classroom TV, click [HERE](#).
- **Emphasize that while there are many ways we are different, there are also many ways we share an identity.** Encourage students to remember that we are all Americans, we are all in the same grade/class, that we may look or act different, but we are a family of HiLiners.
- **Encourage students to approach differences with curiosity and kindness, not suspicion.** Being different does not mean being wrong, it is an opportunity to share new experiences. Allow students to bring in items or food that can teach their classmates about their unique culture. Be sure to encourage perspective-taking – saying “That food is disgusting!” can sound judging and hurtful, but we all have different preferences, especially when it comes to food.
- **Respond to generalizations and stereotypes.** Share counter-examples to encourage critical thinking and point out that not everyone in their own race/ethnic/religious group acts or believes the same. As a class, an investigation into the background of that stereotype may be an authentic learning experience.

4. **ADAPT YOUR TEACHING PRACTICES.**

- **Maintain a growth mindset for all students.** Maintain the same high academic standards for all students. and demonstrate your belief that they can achieve those standards, regardless of their diverse ethnic or socioeconomic background.
- **Explicitly teach the expectations of your classroom.** Different cultures or socioeconomic levels may value different things than the white middle class that tends to determine academic standards and procedures in our school, and if students are not given the tools to succeed in that framework, they will struggle. No matter the age level, don't assume all of your students were taught the same strategies for success.

5. TEACH FOR ALL CULTURES.

- **Welcome students into your classroom as a place that is also theirs by including representations of all students and their cultures.** For example, If you include any religious holidays on the class calendar, include the holidays of all students in your classroom. It's not about being politically correct; when students see their own experience represented and recognized in their classroom, students see that their identity is valued.
- **Allow your students to be cultural experts.** It is ok for you to not know everything about every culture. But don't be afraid to ask questions, and then step back and let your students share their life experiences. What an engaging experience to learn from their peer-experts!
- **Ensure that your teaching is authentic.** Culturally-responsive teaching doesn't mean teaching about Martin Luther King Jr. on Martin Luther King Day. That is important, but there are opportunities throughout the year to bring in diverse perspectives in a more authentic way. Consider ways you can represent more cultures not by adding "one more thing" to your curriculum, but for example, by reading stories/novels from different perspectives or world regions, particularly if you have students with those backgrounds who will see their identity validated.

Sources:

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Hi [REDACTED],

Thank you again for meeting with me a few weeks ago. I have always appreciated that you are a superintendent who is willing to hear out his staff. At the end of the meeting you said you would be interested in knowing what I thought after the training so here it is! I too would be curious to hear if you have additional thoughts, rebuttals, or solutions to what I am writing.

Dr. Sandy Womack Jr.

First, I find it ironic that they are pushing to hear both sides of the story but throughout the training I really only felt as if one was addressed. They spoke as if their opinions were what everyone holds to believe as truth. I will address this more throughout this letter.

Dr. Womack Jr. stressed more than once that MLK did what he did under the guise of love. Which I believe to be his motivation. However, going forward with that is not a universal truth for every person because love has so many different meanings. What is love? It has been so watered down in our culture today... people can love coffee, they can love the free samples at Costco, they can love their spouse. But what does it mean to love? Here is what I have come to know what love is...

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Culturally speaking, the term “you do you” seems to be what love is. You do whatever makes you feel good and I will love and accept you for it. But what if what you are doing is wrong or harmful to yourself? Would you not step up and try to help that person out of love? I think most people would say absolutely. Again, referencing the verse, it says that love does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. But what is truth? That is the next question that needs to be answered because it seems that truth is relative to circumstances, feelings, and experience. There is nothing that is concrete anymore. I believe the foundation for truth comes from the Bible. People may disagree, but it seems to have done this country pretty well until we started to stray from the common sense it has given us.

Going back to Dr. Womack Jr.’s presentation he seemed to push the single idea that African American’s are not succeeding because they do not see themselves anywhere in history as being successful other than in areas which are athletics, entertainers, and civil rights leaders. That could be an issue, but there are a lot more other stressing issues. Let’s look at the family units and the structure of a family that does not include both a mother and a father. This has affected the African American population. Let’s look at how much black on black violence there is within their own communities. And as far as systemic racism, I do not believe that to be true. Why do people come to America, because of the idea of equal opportunity? The system is not designed to work against specific people, thankfully rules like that have been abolished. That is not to say that there are not bad people within the system who are prideful and think themselves better than others, but as far as the entire system, I do not see evidence of that. --- I think Candace Owen’s has an interested and truthful point of view in this article: <https://www.newsfromtheperimeter.com/home/2020/9/8/candace-owens-dismantles-the-big-lie-of-systemic-racism-says-white-guilt-is-allowing-people-to-act-like-toddlers>

If we are lacking some history, I do believe that should change. I believe history is important because it shows us where we came from and how we got here. In my opinion, I think it is sad to see how history is being destroyed in today’s culture because it does not fit the narrative of what people want to hear today. We learn from history, it does not matter if it is good or bad, we can still learn from it. Speaking to history, I think it is

important to remember that what unites us is the fact that we are American. History is history and important whether it is done by African Americans, Caucasian Americans or whomever else. I think we are separating ourselves more by making the distinctions. Instead, we should just promote the American history and unite under that. This is a link to a video that actually does talk about the importance of American history and how school curriculum does not do justice in promoting the awesome heritage that we should be united under. <https://youtu.be/ltBca4NMmis> This is truly a great listen, so I would encourage you to watch it. And like Dr. Womack Jr. said, we need both sides of the story and I think it fits perfectly with his topic.

Sharayah Robinson

This presentation was extremely one-sided and not just in my opinion, I will give sufficient examples of what I mean.

I am going to start with her 'Fast Facts' and pose questions as I go along that illustrate that she is imposing 'her truth' in this area to fit the narrative that supports their side rather than giving evidence for both.

1. Many students are LGBTQIA+: Some studies say that over half of GenZ youth do not identify as completely straight.

First, I would like to know what studies? You can find just about anything now that supports your idea. In addition, it says 'some studies' well what do the other studies say? The next question is, why is this happening in the GenZ generation? What changed? Could it possibly be that this lifestyle of LGBTQ is occurring more because it is being pushed or normalized more in the media and entertainment industry? Has it become a thing because of its influence and popularity?

2. They aren't too young to know: The median age that someone comes out as LGBTQIA+ is 12 years old. What studies show that they aren't too young? There are reasons we don't let people drink until they are 21 and that is because their brain is still developing. There are reasons we have to teach and tell kids to eat their vegetables and about good hygiene because they don't make good decisions for themselves yet. They really do just act on desire. Reason and critical thinking skills in the brain are still being developed. Does anyone think it is a coincidence that at this age a lot of kids are going through puberty and other changes that may make them question or struggle with things and that might just be a phase after they are done with puberty. We all have that 'awkward' stage. So really tell me who and how did they decide that they aren't too young to decide. If they choose to transition to a different sex and take both puberty blockers and hormones at the same time, do they know that they will become sterile? How does a 12 year old know if they want to have kids or not?

The next bias assumption that the presenter made is that we have all thrown science out the window. For example, she referred to that when a child is born they are assigned a gender. "Sex is DETERMINED it is not ASSIGNED at fertilization by whether or not you have that Y chromosome."

She pushes the word ASSIGNED because "if you can convince people that if their sex or sex of their child was merely assigned at birth then it is more plausible that sex could be reassigned later in life."

Another bias assumption was that everyone believes that there are more than two sexes. Science says otherwise. "There are only two sexes, male or female. If you are conceived with a Y chromosome you will develop into a male. Every cell in your body has that Y chromosome: brain, skin, muscle, heart, the immune cells. In fact we know that there are at least 6,500 genetic differences between males and females that impact every cell of the body, every organ system, even how we visually perceive things, how we can hear, how we can process emotions. These biochemical differences, differences at the cellular level matter. They matter in terms of diagnosis, in terms of outcome.

Male Genetic & Biological Composition	Female Genetic & Biological Composition
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35% greater heart size than female 15-25% greater aerobic capacity 40% greater upper body strength 13% greater bone density Larger muscle fibers	Greater flexibility Increased fine motor skills Greater endurance.
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These differences cannot be erased no matter how many hormones one takes or surgeries they have.”

A lot of the facts written above come from this documentary. Again, I would encourage you to watch it. I will tell you that it comes from a biblical world view but even if you leave the Bible out of it, the science, facts, and the testimonials of individuals who lived the LGBTQ+ life but have since left have undeniable truth in them. <https://inhisimage.movie> (p.s. the website will ask you to put in an e-mail to watch the free documentary, if you don't want to get any random junk mail (although I don't believe I have received any yet) you can always use my e-mail to gain access --- [REDACTED])

The final thing that seems to need debunking is when she stated that intersex people are as common as red haired individuals as a fact. I would be interested to know where she got her data and also how she is defining intersex. Here is what I found:

“Intersex or better defined as Disorder of Sex Development: Rare congenital disorders, all associated with reduced fertility, in which either infant genitalia are ambiguous in appearance or an individual’s sexual appearance fails to match what would be expected given the person’s sex chromosomes. The estimated incidence of DSD ranges from .02% to 1.7% of the general population depending upon how rigorously researchers define intersex conditions.”

Then I found that red-haired individuals are about 1-2% of the population. So yes, she was within the range but again only just giving evidence that fits her cause. For example, if you read the last line of the definition provided above it states: “depending upon how rigorously researchers define intersex conditions”, so her definition of intersex people must be on the broad end thus giving her a higher percentage and helping her case. However, an accurate definition of Intersex would show that less than .02% of the general population are TRULY classified as intersex according to the Journal of Sex Research.

Another quote from the documentary that I gave a link to that I think is important.

“Why don’t we help our students understand why they feel this way? Why they think this way? Psychology is real. Some children misperceive family dynamics that makes them believe their biological sex causes them to be unsafe or unloved. Or in other cases there is sexual abuse going on. It needs to be investigated.”

Yes, I think it does need to be investigated before we blindly accept something that can change their life in such a drastic way. In addition: “80-95% of gender dysphoric children who go through puberty without hormones eventually become comfortable with their bodies.” Journal of Sexual Medicine

More than the other two, I believe that only facts that side with her case were presented in her session. The last thing that I will say on the matter will again reference equity. It is not possible to have equal outcomes only equal opportunities. If we strive for equal outcomes something will be taken away from the perceived group of power to be given to the perceived minority group. My example for this was her request for pronouns. My belief is that God created man and woman and he gave you that biology at birth. He designed you. So in someone asking me to call them a he when they are actually a she is to deny my God, his power, his authority, his sovereignty over creation and to deny my beliefs. So I have to deny myself in order to affirm

someone else's beliefs? Why do my beliefs get denied and theirs do not? Why is one being held above the other?

Andrew Montoya

By this time my brain was honestly fried, frustrated, and overworked so I do not have a lot to say on it. The main thing that I heard was implicit bias which I don't agree with either. I think we all have our sins and most of it is caused by pride or selfishness. With implicit bias I mainly thought it was a nice way to say that white people are racist. Is that what he meant, I don't think so but I think that is what a lot of people think especially when you say that you subconsciously hold an idea about someone because of your experiences.

Conclusion

I know this was a lot to read, so if you took the time to read it thank you! If you took the time to read and read/watch the resources, I will say thank you again as I know your time is needed in a lot of areas. However, if we are sticking to the theme at the beginning of seeing both sides then I think it is important. As teachers, we are not to withhold viewpoints from our students, and I think the same should be for our teachers. We all know that we signed up to be lifelong learners and this is one of those areas where we need to gather all the facts from all sides and critically think through the information to find our conclusion.

In our meeting you asked why I care about this subject? I care about it for two reason. I have watched so many kids, kids that I have counseled at camp, kids that I have taught and seen grow up, kids that I have coached be influenced by a world view and the current culture. Several of these kids I have grown to know on a more personal level and have watched as the current culture presents something as norm and it sucks them in. In the end it isn't what they expected and then they are left in a worse state. Girls who thought having sex with their boyfriend would make them worth something (idea promoted by culture), getting drunk and underage drinking is the thing to do (again promoted by culture in movies and media) only to get caught and miss out on sports or in one situation in life because of a driving accident. I am tired of things being normalized and promoted. As teachers, we are asked to care for our students, to look out for them, to advocate for them when the truth is not being presented. This is what love is, not rejoicing in the wrong but the truth (going back to the verse at the beginning.) I love and have a passion for our youth. The second reason is that I love God. If you love something you give it your time, your energy, and your devotion. I believe what the Bible says to be true and as a believer I am called to stand by it.

Thank you again Josh for your time, and I would like to know any thoughts you have whether that is through e-mail or in person again.