



HONESTY **IN** **EDUCATION**

An Ohio Race Class Narrative
Guide for **Critical Race Theory**

**ALL IN
FOR OHIO**

BUILDING AN OHIO FOR ALL OF US

ALL IN FOR OHIO

AN OHIO FOR ALL OF US.



AN OHIO RACE CLASS NARRATIVE GUIDE FOR CRITICAL RACE THEORY

INTRO

As some segments of our country publicly acknowledge and increasingly reckon with the ways our laws, practices and institutions harm Black, Indigenous and other people of color, the right has resorted to its usual dog whistle strategy of distraction and division. In this most recent round, they have latched onto the phrase “critical race theory” as a catch-all for their anxieties about losing power and dominance. Like with “political correctness” in the ‘90s and “cancel culture” today, they have made school and college campuses a primary battleground, stoking fears about how and what we teach our kids so they can undermine trust in and funding for schools and teachers.

KEY DIRECTIVES

1. Seize the moral high ground and engage on our terms. With attention on education, let’s talk about the teaching and curricula we support and desire.
2. Ascribe motivations to the opposition. Instead of unwittingly repeating the opposition in order to dispel their claims (e.g. “we are not teaching grade schoolers about XYZ”), talk about why they’re attacking curricula and teachers.
3. Bring this back - always - to what we want as opposed to leaving us on defense against their attacks. Don’t volunteer the term “critical race theory,” an academic concept the right has co-opted as an all-purpose dog whistle, but when asked directly about it, define critical race theory on our terms as the honest, accurate, and up-to-date education students deserve.

SAMPLE NARRATIVES

NARRATIVE 1: STRONG COMMUNITIES

Most Ohioans know we build strong communities by being good neighbors to everyone, no matter our race or background. But today, certain Ohio politicians are doing the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations who want to divide us by race and whitewash our history, hoping they can use the manufactured controversy to take resources from our schools and pad their own power and profits. Together, we can reject their division and make sure America finally lives up to its promise of freedom and justice for all, no exceptions.

NARRATIVE 2: OHIO'S PROMISE

No matter where we're from or how long we've lived here, Ohioans of all races and all places work hard to build diverse, thriving communities - often in the face of racism and prejudice. Our state has a rich, but complicated, legacy that we should be proud of. But today, a national network of corporate backed organizations has manufactured a controversy in our town/state - pitting us against each other by race and lying about some of the difficult truths in our history. They're hoping to distract us by censoring our teachers and whitewashing our history so that they can take resources from our schools and pad their power and profits. We're joining together to make sure Ohio fully lives up to America's promise of freedom and justice for all, no exceptions.

SAMPLE NARRATIVES

NARRATIVE 3: A MORE PERFECT UNION

Most Ohioans, no matter the color of our skin or what's in our wallets, believe our children deserve to grow up in a state where they can flourish, grow and thrive. But today, a national network of corporate-backed lobbyists are trying to distract us with manufactured lies meant to divide us, censor our teachers and whitewash our history so they can take resources from our schools and pad their own power and profits. Let's join together across our differences to demand our kids are taught the truth, so they're prepared to carry on the work of building a more perfect union for all of us, no exceptions.

NARRATIVE 4: TIME TO HEAL

No matter where we're from or what we look like; whether we've called Ohio home for generations or just recently, our different stories weave together and make our state a vibrant place to live. But today, certain politicians are doing the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations. They're manufacturing a controversy meant to erase our history and pit us against each other, so they can rig our budgets and our laws for their profit. Whether Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, we're strong enough to face the difficult truths in our shared history. Let's come together and tell our (officials/elected leaders) that for our nation to heal the wounds of the past and build a brighter future, we must honestly confront our history.

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

- Most Ohioans know we build strong communities by being good neighbors to everyone, no matter our race or background.
- Our state has a rich, but complicated, legacy we should be proud of.
- From the Underground Railroad to the Great Migration - Black, brown and immigrant Ohioans were and are an important part of our history. They came here for opportunity and freedom, but also faced segregation, police brutality, and white flight.
- Our kids are resilient and strong, and they deserve to know the truth. There are age-appropriate ways to teach them honestly about the wrongs of slavery, genocide, internment and forced resettlement.
- Our students can have honest discussions about the threats to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that still exist for many. They deserve an honest, accurate education.
- Our kids need to know the truth about our history so they're equipped to carry on the important work of building a better union for all of us.
- Teaching all of our children – whatever their race or ZIP code – means teaching them the truth. It means finding age-appropriate ways to have difficult conversations in the classroom.
- We should present to students the good, bad and ugly of our past so that they can build a better, brighter future.
- A national network of corporate-backed lobbyists and organizations are peddling lies meant to divide us while they take resources away from our public schools.
- Certain Ohio politicians are doing the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations who want to divide us by race so they use our public resources for their profit.
- Together, we're joining across race, place, and income to make sure Ohio fully lives up to America's promise of freedom and justice for all.
- Together, we're pulling through for one another so our kids can grow up in a state where they flourish, grow and thrive.



SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

HASHTAGS - #TRUTHBETOLD #TEACHTHETRUTH

- Whether Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, we're strong enough to face the difficult truths in our shared history.
- Teaching all of our children – whatever of their race or ZIP code – means teaching them the truth. It means finding age-appropriate ways to have difficult conversations in the classroom.
- The coordinated attacks we see on #HonestyInEducation is a corporate-backed, national effort led by those who are enriching themselves by dividing Americans by race and place so they can siphon our public resources for their own profit.
- Today, certain Ohio politicians do the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations who want to divide us by race so they can whitewash our history and cling to their unearned power.
- From the Underground Railroad to the Great Migration - Black, brown and immigrant Ohioans were and are an important part of our history. They also faced segregation, police brutality, and white flight. Our kids are resilient and strong, and they deserve to know the truth.
- A national network of corporate-backed lobbyists and organizations are peddling lies meant to divide us while they take resources away from our public schools. Students deserve to learn the honest good, bad and ugly of our past so that they can build a better, brighter future.
- Our kids can have honest discussions about the threats to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that still exist for many. They deserve an honest, accurate education.
- Our kids need to know the truth about our history so they're equipped to carry on the important work of building a better union for all of us.

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

Policy Matters Ohio and the Ohio Organizing Collaborative convened a group of activists and advocates to brainstorm elements of a Race Class Narrative message that would resonate most with Ohioans.

Ohio Values:
The group brainstormed values and they seem to fall into several categories

PRIDE	WORK	BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR	FAIRNESS & RESPECT	KIDS & FAMILY	SPORTS /COMPETITION	NEGATIVE
Pride in our local institutions	Hard work + grit	Ohio nice (being genuine)	Fair treatment / nondiscrimination	An Ohio where all of our kids are cared for + achieve their highest potential	Friendly competition	Independence
Hometown pride	Dignity of work	Midwest Friendly	Respecting each other's differences	Family	Football/Sports	"We're all just making it" (realism)
Ohio has strong history (Underground Railroad, Civil War, etc.) and we're proud of it		Looking out for neighbors + communities	Respect for others	Setting up all our kids to succeed	Competitive	Self-sufficiency
		Kind and Courteous				Good For Business
		Community driven				

**ALL IN
FOR OHIO**

OHIO VALUES

The value of neighborliness/community came up the most in the brainstorming session. The related values of fairness and respect came up three times. Three people mentioned a sense of state pride and three others mentioned sports and competition, which are also related. The importance of family and children also appeared three times on the jam board. The value of hard work appeared twice.

For the purposes of crafting a message that pushes back on the manufactured attacks on Critical Race Theory, the most relevant values appear to be: **Community, Fairness & Respect, Kids & Family and a Sense of Ohio Pride.**

Suggestions:

Most Ohioans know we build strong communities by being good neighbors to everyone, no matter our race, zip code, or background.

Many Ohioans, whether we're Black, white or brown, overcame and face difficult odds to build a state with a rich legacy we can be proud of.

Most Ohioans, no matter the color of our skin or what's in our wallets, know that all of us are better off when our children can grow up in a state where they can flourish, grow and thrive.

No matter where we're from or what we look like; whether we've called Ohio home for generations or just recently, our different stories weave together and make our state a vibrant place to live.



OHIO VILLAINS

KEY INSIGHTS

Our group identified four main categories of villains: **1)** Politicians, **2)** National organizations and funders, **3)** Pundits who serve as mouthpieces for the opposition, and **4)** State and local groups. The different villains the group identified expose the truth about the fake CRT controversy: that it is a highly organized, well-funded national campaign that supports and seeds local and statewide efforts.

Research shows that the public responds best when we describe the efforts to censor teachers and erase our history as the work of corporate-backed, national efforts led by those who are enriching themselves by dividing Americans by race and place so they can siphon our public resources for their own profit.

SUGGESTIONS

Today, a national network of corporate-backed lobbyists are trying to distract us with manufactured lies meant to divide us so they can dictate to our teachers and censor what happens in our kids' classrooms.

Today, certain politicians are doing the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations who want to divide us by race and whitewash our history, hoping they can use the manufactured controversy to pad their profits by taking resources from our public schools.

Today, a national network of corporate-backed organizations has manufactured a controversy in our town/state. They're trying to pit us against each other by race and lie about our history, so they can distract us as they rig our budgets and our laws to hang onto their wealth and power.

Today certain politicians are doing the bidding of a national network of extremist groups and greedy corporations. They're manufacturing a controversy meant to erase our history, censor our teachers and pit us against each other so they can take resources from our schools and pad their profits.

OHIO VILLAINS



POLITICIANS	NATIONAL NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS, CORPORATIONS & FUNDERS	PUNDITS	STATE & LOCAL ORGANIZATION	OTHER
State Board Ed: John Hagen	Fox News (right-wing media)	My Pillow Guy	Franklin County School Parents For Traditional Education	Cleveland, Dan Gilbert (taking advantage of systemic inequalities undermining revenue for communities)
Sponsors of HB327 - Sarah Fowler Arthur, Diane Grendell, HB322 - Don Jones	Billionaires and their lobbyists/propagandists (Remind people this is an orchestrated, coordinated, national campaign)	Laura Ingraham	Gonidakis, "Ohio Right To Life", in the "value voters" coalition	Our opposition's base working as messengers on their behalf
Sen. Candidate J.D. Vance	Corporations like AT&T, Exxon Mobil, Yahoo, Facebook, Walmart who are funding organizations selling these lies	Aaron Baer, Center for Christian Virtue	Ohio Value Voters	
Sen. Candidate Josh Mandel	Conservative think tanks and their funders	Chris Rufo at the Manhattan Institute	"Protect Ohio Children"	
Sen Candidate Jane Timken	Heritage Foundation	Tucker Carlson		
AG Dave Yost	ALEC			
State Rep. Mike Loychik	Freedom Foundation			
Cosponsors of the anti-CRT bills (Most of the GOP)	SchoolhouseRights.org			
Republican candidates & campaigns	Center for Christian Virtue (Anti LGBTQ+)			
Certain sitting state school board members	"Parents Defending Education" funded by the Koch Network			
Certain candidates for school board				
Mike Carey, Candidate for OH-15				
Donald Trump				

OHIO VISION & OUTCOMES

The group's brainstorm fell into two main categories:

A better, more unified nation; and children who are better prepared for the future. We also received great feedback about how our nation needs to heal from our past.

**ALL IN
FOR OHIO**

SUGGESTIONS:

Whether Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, we're strong enough to face the difficult truths in our shared history. Let's come together and tell our (officials/elected leaders) that we must be honest about our past so we can build a brighter future for our children.

We can come together across our differences and reject their lies, so our kids are prepared to build a more perfect union for all of us, no exceptions.

Let's join together across race and place and demand our kids are taught the truth, so they're prepared to carry on the work of making Ohio fulfill its promise and potential.

Together, we can reject their division and make sure our country finally lives up to its promise of freedom and justice for all, no exceptions.

Whether Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, our kids need to know the truth about our shared history so they're equipped to do the important work of building a better union for all of us.

In order for our nation to heal the wounds of the past and build a brighter future, we must honestly confront our history.

CONCLUSION

The controversy about critical race theory in our schools is manufactured and fake, but the consequences for our children and our state are real. We hope this guide will inform Ohio advocates, activists and policymakers to craft effective messages in defeating the smear campaign and elevating a hopeful, positive narrative about the importance of facing our past to build a better future.

Partner Acknowledgements:

- Equality Ohio
- Faith In Public Life
- For Our Future Fund
- Honesty in Education Ohio
- Innovation Ohio
- LEAD Ohio
- NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio
- Ohio Education Association
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Ohio Organizing Collaborative
- Policy Matters Ohio
- Red Wine & Blue
- SEIU 1199
- Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio
- We Make the Future

BUILDING AN OHIO FOR ALL OF US

ALL IN FOR OHIO