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 **OPENTHEBOOKS OVERSIGHT REPORT**

SCHOOLS FOR RADICALS

**THE SECRET PUSH TO INSTITUTE
RADICAL DEI CURRICULUMS WITHIN THE
PENTAGON'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



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THE SECRET PUSH TO INSTITUTE RADICAL DEI CURRICULUMS WITHIN THE PENTAGON'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dedicated to Dr. Tom Coburn

OpenTheBooks Honorary Chairman
Rest In Peace - March 28, 2020

By Adam Andrzejewski
Founder/CEO

Thomas W. Smith
Chairman

*"OpenTheBooks is doing the work I envisioned when the Coburn-Obama bill became law.
Their innovative app and other tools are putting sunlight through a magnifying glass."*

U.S. Senator Tom Coburn, MD
Washington, D.C. | March 11, 2014

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(Public Law 109-282, 109th Congress)

*"I know that restoring transparency is not only the surest way to
achieve results, but also to earn back the trust in government..."*

U.S. Sen. Barack Obama

PROLOGUE

The Department of Defense Education Activity (Pentagon's K-12 public schools) is a sub-agency of the Department of Defense, charged with educating the children of military service members around the world. There are 160 DoDEA schools in 11 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico, according to the U.S. Army [website](#). About 66,000 students from pre-k-12 are enrolled in these schools. DoDEA's fiscal year 2023 enacted [budget](#) was \$2.25 billion.

Like many educational institutions over the past few years, DoDEA has come under fire for extreme radical pedagogical practices under the umbrella of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI). On Juneteenth 2020 then-DoDEA Executive Director Thomas Brady announced that DEI must be "embedded in everything we do."

However, the agency did not receive significant public scrutiny until 2022. That year, reports began surfacing about DoDEA's first DEI chief's racist [tweets](#) against white people, along with [clips](#) from a 2021 "Equity and Access Summit" where staffers discussed how the classrooms can make students more aware of social justice issues, hide "gender transitions" from parents and force "uncomfortable conversations" on race onto both children and staff—crying to be expected.

During a 2023 Congressional hearing, DoDEA [announced](#) that it would be dismantling its DEI department and transferring DEI chief Kelisa Wing to a different position, unrelated to DEI. In internal emails, however, Thomas Brady [stated](#) DEI specialists would be embedded into different departments throughout the agency, and a new DEI Steering Committee would be formed, composed of agency executives and administrative staff.

As DoDEA's ideological operations are driven deeper underground, heavy-handed FOIA redactions and months-long appeals processes prevent the public from learning more about this agency, to the detriment of military members, their families, and the American taxpayer.

The Equity and Access Summit, along with Kelisa Wing's tweets, provided a vanishingly rare glimpse into the day-to-day practice of DEI ideology at the DoDEA. As [OpenTheBooks.com reported](#) in February 2024, DoDEA hid the public links to the Summit videos days after the reports about them began circulating in the press, and the agency has liberally used Freedom of Information Act redactions to obfuscate emails, calendar invitations, and other data that would be useful in understanding its operations.

The men and women serving the United States abroad often have no choice but to send their children to DoDEA schools—unlike counterparts at the Department of State stationed on the same bases, soldiers do not get stipends for homeschooling or to send their kids to local private schools.

DoDEA has proven to be an untrustworthy steward of these children's minds, and agency leadership has gone out of their way to hide practices administrators must know the public and military families find objectionable.

That the agency is [expanding](#) its programs to include universal pre-k—when teachers are openly calling to discuss gender and sexuality with four-year-olds—is more reason to act quickly to rein in this rogue agency.



Introductory slide from DoDEA Equity and Access summit presentation "[Ally 101](#)." The purple flag color includes the text "all ages."

The following report covers what OpenTheBooks.com auditors have been able to piece together about the extent and embedded nature of DEI indoctrination at the agency, using publicly available sources and information obtained from whistleblowers. The report combines spending trends with known problematic pedagogy and administrative practices to create a picture of this highly secretive educational institution.

We urge Congress to act to bring more transparency to DoDEA, or at least give military families a chance to opt out through school choice vouchers.

METHODOLOGY

OpenTheBooks auditors used spending data gathered from federal checkbook database USASpending.gov. Other information was collected from FOIA requests and through videos from the Equity and Access Summit provided by a whistleblower.

The report primarily covers fiscal years 2017-2023, with a specific focus on policy at the agency from 2020. Other information regarding agency spending or activities was collected via online resources. We have attached an appendix which has extra examples of DEI and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in practice in schools, from the 2021 Equity and Access Summit.

Citations are provided as hyperlinks within the text.

Spending figures are not adjusted for inflation.

Journalists, organizations, oversight committees, politicians and watchdogs are encouraged to review the facts delineated in our report and continue to investigate.

WHO WE ARE

American transparency is a public charity. We do not accept government money. Our oversight reports present hard data so citizens, media, think tanks, politicians, and watchdogs can "follow the money." Hard facts are non-partisan and enhance the public discourse.

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TOP 10 TAKEAWAYS

1. IN 2023, the Pentagon's K-12 public schools (DoDEA) told Congress it would dismantle its Diversity Equity and Inclusion department, only to secretly create a DEI Steering Committee and move DEI professionals into less public roles at the agency.

2. DoDEA HAS RESISTED attempts to gain information via Freedom of Information Act request about the DEI Steering Committee and other agency activities. Requests are often returned heavily redacted and appeals take months to a year or longer to process.

3. ALONG WITH PAID CONTENT, staffers have been found to use and advocate for a variety of troubling free resources that push radical ideologies in the classroom. Because the content is available online at no cost from organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center, it is impossible to trace with spending data.

4. "SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING" classroom practices are collecting sensitive information from students daily – and it is not at all clear how or how securely this data is stored – and DoDEA has refused to specify. The agency plans on making SEL a priority over the next few years.

5. BOTH CHILDREN AND STAFF are subjected to DEI struggle sessions. DoDEA staffers were presented with a book called *Coaching for Equity*, which rebukes capitalism, "patriarchy," traditions like Thanksgiving, and America's existence as a country.

6. DoDEA STAFFERS AFFIRMED using changing academic standards at the agency as a trojan horse to inject more DEI topics into everyday classroom discussions.

7. UNLIKE COUNTERPARTS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, military families cannot access funds for school choice to exit DoDEA school systems while abroad, a policy that must change to give servicemembers full educational freedom for their families.

8. FEDERAL GRANT SPENDING at DoDEA has roughly tripled since 2020, from \$20 to over \$70 million annually. Since 2022 \$5.2 million in grants was allocated to address learning loss during the pandemic.

9. OUR FOIA REQUEST REVEALED salary spending in FY 2022 was \$1.3 billion, but individual salaries remain a mystery, as DoDEA refused to disclose this data, unlike nearly every other federal agency or school district across the country.

10. CONTRACT SPENDING HAS STAYED AT ABOUT \$300 MILLION PER YEAR since 2017. Millions of dollars have been found to go to purveyors of DEI-related content used in the classroom.





PENTAGON'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS WAR ON TRANSPARENCY

As [outlined](#) in an OpenTheBooks.com report from February 2024, DoDEA has aggressively implemented Freedom of Information Act redactions to keep basic information about the agency's new DEI endeavors hidden.

In March 2023, DoDEA CEO Thomas Brady stated in an [internal email](#) that members of the new DEI Steering Committee would include himself, the DoDEA Chief Operating Officer, the DoDEA Chief Academic Officer, and twelve others.

Given the former DEI Chief's scandals at the agency, it is important for the public to know who else is on this committee, and how the committee impacts education and curriculum.

Our FOIA request [revealed](#) the general job titles and departments of committee members. While OpenTheBooks.com auditors inquired for the specific names, we were told the names were not available for disclosure and to check back later.

Auditors sent another FOIA request for electronic invitations regarding the DEI Steering Committee on the calendars of the DoDEA Chief Academic Officer and Chief Operating Officer. [Responsive documents](#) were so redacted that they were practically unusable: all non-executive names on the calendar invitations were redacted, along with all meeting descriptions.

Yet another calendar FOIA for a DoDEA DEI specialist revealed more committee meetings and more redactions, including a 14-page slide deck with only the title slide and a slide defining DEI revealed for public scrutiny.

From: Brady, Thomas M. Mr. SES OSD/DoDEA-HQ
Sent: Thu, 22 Jun 2023 13:51:32 +0000
To: Schiavino-Narvaez, Beth Dr. SES OSD/DoDEA-HQ; Burcham, Jay M. Mr. CIV
 OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ;
 (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6)
 CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(3); 10 U.S.C. §130b; CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ;
 (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6)
 (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV
 OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV OSD/DoDEA-HQ; (b)(6) CIV, OSD/DoDEA-HQ
Subject: DEI Steering Committee
 (b)(5)

Meeting Details

(b)(5); (b)(6)

(b)(5); (b)(6)

Participants: DIR, CAO, CoS, (b)(5); (b)(6)

RAHS: Agenda Attached / Slides Attached

POC: (b)(6)

One page from the redacted slide deck and calendar information FOIA production. See the entire production [here](#).

As detailed in a Federalist [article](#) from 2023, OpenTheBooks is not the only organization struggling to get information from this secretive agency:

- Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) sent a [letter](#) to Thomas Brady in 2020 about alleged “wasteful travel spending,” particularly concerning multiple agency-sponsored trips to Hawaii. Grassley maintained in the letter that his inquiries were not fully resolved.
- Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Mo., sent a letter to DoD Secretary Lloyd Austin asking for more information regarding DoDEA’s policies on the gender transitions of students. She has not yet received a response.
- The author of the article, a parent of a former DoDEA student, also asked for policies regarding transgender students at DoDEA schools. She was told 38 pages related to her search were being withheld, and over a year later she has not received a response from her appeal.

In February 2024 Representative Jim Banks (R-Indiana), who serves as Chairman of the Congressional Anti-Woke Caucus, sent a [letter](#) to Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Ashish S. Vazirani demanding answers on DoDEA DEI Steering Committee activity by March 13, 2024. As of this publication, the agency has not responded.

OpenTheBooks.com has appealed the redaction decisions on our FOIAs, but the wait time for an appeal response—even if successful—can take many months to a year or more. This is far too long for military parents, policymakers, and taxpayers to wait to see how their money is being spent indoctrinating children into radical ideologies.

As we continue to push for transparency, we can shed light on the current DoDEA climate using spending data and what we already know about agency practices.



THE 2021 EQUITY AND ACCESS SUMMIT

Held in May 2021, DoDEA’s “Equity and Access Summit,” featuring [58 staff presentations](#), allowed outsiders to gain a comprehensive understanding of the agency’s DEI operations. The Claremont Institute’s September 2022 report, aptly titled “[Grooming Future Revolutionaries](#),” provides an in-depth look into how DEI is weaponized to orient the children of servicemembers towards social justice activism.

These children are subject to frequent moves and unique family stressors, making them particularly vulnerable to the emotionally manipulative pedagogical methods described in the report.



Slide from “Daily Prompt Questions SEL” deck, provided as an [extra resource](#) in the presentation at the Access and Equity summit “Building Classroom Climate with SEL.” See full presentation [here](#).

Along with outlining the extreme radical ideology pervading the agency, and the teaching techniques to open children to emotionally charged conversations about race, class, sexuality, and gender, the Summit featured many tools staff at the agency are using to integrate DEI into DoDEA.

Therefore, while DoDEA has sought to hide its activities since disbanding its DEI department in March 2023, the public can approximate on-going DEI-related measures through federal

Mari Jones 4/29/2021, 10:41:09 AM

When talking about heterosexuality as the "norm", we are setting up an environment of "us" and "them".

How do we change our practices that inherently cause conflict?

public spending databases.

Comment from a DoDEA regional administrator on [resources](#) given to staffers at the Equity and Access Summit. This staffer believes talking with students about heterosexuality as the "norm" causes conflict.

The following sections detail tools and spending for both Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and social justice-activism related classroom practices, two key components of DEI pedagogy.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) sounds like it might involve tips and exercises to help kids get along and manage themselves. And until recently, that was the idea.

But around 2019 the central SEL organization, [CASEL](#), began promoting “transformative SEL,” a [politicized vision](#) that infused ideological concepts like those in DEI.

CASEL resources were referenced many times throughout the DoDEA Equity and Access Summit.

According to the CASEL [website](#) “Transformative SEL is a term that refers to applying the SEL framework toward the goals of creating equitable settings and systems and promoting justice-oriented schools and civic engagement.”

SEL can become a vehicle to use students’ natural desires to be liked by their peers, as well as their desire to be “empathetic,” into a campaign that is fundamentally ideological and political.

This is done in part by asking children to fixate on their “identities” and “privileges.” Techniques for doing so were discussed in-depth during the Equity and Access Summit, including through “difficult conversations” where children are [expected](#) to cry.

Once children divulge their socio-economic, racial, ethnic, sexual, and other “identities,” they can situate themselves and others in a hierarchy of “power,” or as SEL proponents say, become “self-” and “socially” aware.

“*[REDI] must be a foundational premise...by educating, engaging, and empowering students to understand issues surrounding race and discrimination, we will lay the foundation for lasting change and progress. To begin, important, and sometimes difficult conversations...*
DoDEA- Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion”

Slide from presentation “[REDI: First Steps for Leaders: Let’s Talk!](#)” highlighting the emphasis on conducting “difficult conversations” on DoDEA’s now-defunct DEI [webpage](#).

SEL also asks students to be hypervigilant of their own and their classmate's emotional states. Sharing and expressing such emotions and personal information is intended to "build trust" with teachers, administrators, and classmates. See Appendix C for more examples of how "difficult conversations" are presented in DoDEA classrooms.

While gaining trust with students through one-on-one or class discussions, school staff collect data on students' "emotional wellness" throughout the school day.

Data is used to inform DoDEA's program of "Multi-Tiered System of Support," (MTSS) a major agency activity to support "equitable learning experiences," according to the DoDEA's [2023-2024 Blueprint for Continuous Improvement](#). Data can be used to direct students to mental health interventions that parents may not be aware of.

The Blueprint states:

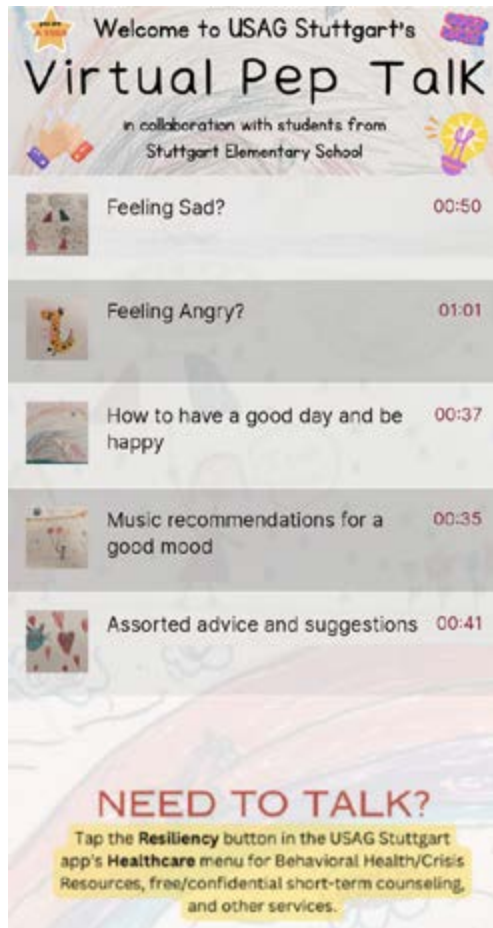
"The first step in DoDEA's Multi-Tiered System of Support process is leveraging appropriate student data to better understand students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs and where they might need additional support."

Like DEI before it, DoDEA has oriented the entire agency's educational philosophy around SEL and MTSS, a move some experts find troubling. According to Max Eden, research fellow at American Enterprise Institute:

"MTSS mechanized teacher-student relationships, replacing intuition and the human touch with data-tracking and 'interventions.' It assumes, at its core, that all students need some form of intervention, making it in practice often a black check to quasi-therapeutic practices."

Investigative journalist Abigail Shrier's 2024 book *Bad Therapy: Why the Kids Aren't Growing Up* further outlines the damage caused by SEL in practice, positing that making students constantly examine their own emotions encourages them to be led by and subject to their feelings rather than to assert mastery and self-control.

The following sections highlight known tools and technologies related to SEL currently in use at DoDEA, along with the financial costs associated with those tools. See Appendix A and B for more in-depth examples of SEL in practice from DoDEA staff.



An example of an SEL-related mental health resource and intervention made available to Stuttgart High School in Germany. Elementary students give advice on mood regulation to high school students via pre-recorded messages. High school students are then prompted to take advantage of “free/confidential short-term counseling” provided by the school.

KNOWN SEL-RELATED VENDORS

One presentation, “Social and Emotional Wellness Inventory Technology Tools,” outlined various DoDEA-approved tools teachers have available to collect information on students’ emotions throughout the day.

The presenter emphasized “my session is on the social emotional wellness inventory of tech tools that are DoDEA approved, that is the most important thing, DoDEA approved...that is what I have to let you know, that it has to be DoDEA approved.”

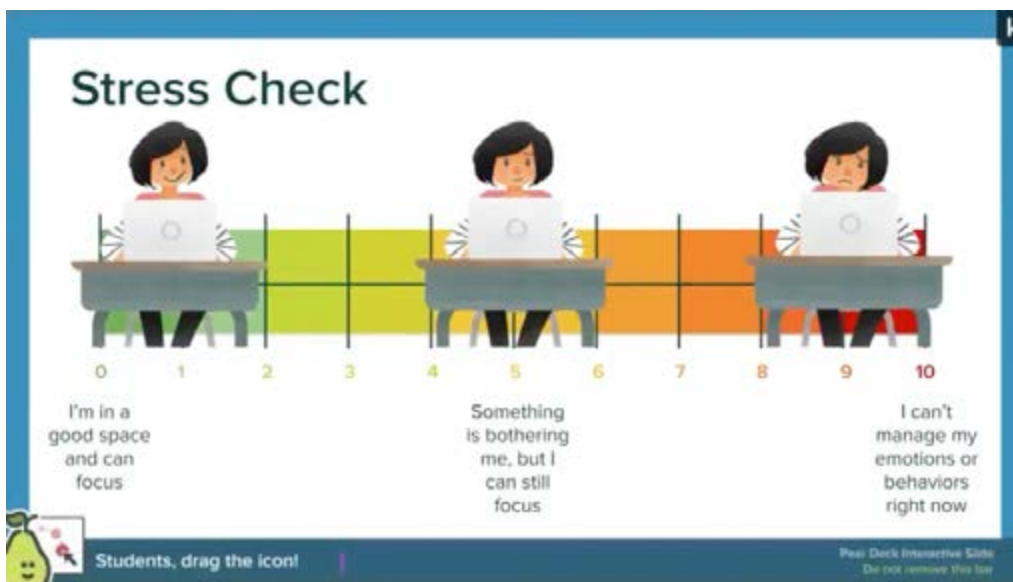
While other tools are likely being used to monitor the “emotional wellness” of the children in DoDEA schools, this presentation provided the best look into how specific examples are used in practice.

PEAR DECK AND GOOGLE FORMS

The first technology presented is Pear Deck, an interactive application featuring different slideshow templates to engage students in classroom instruction.

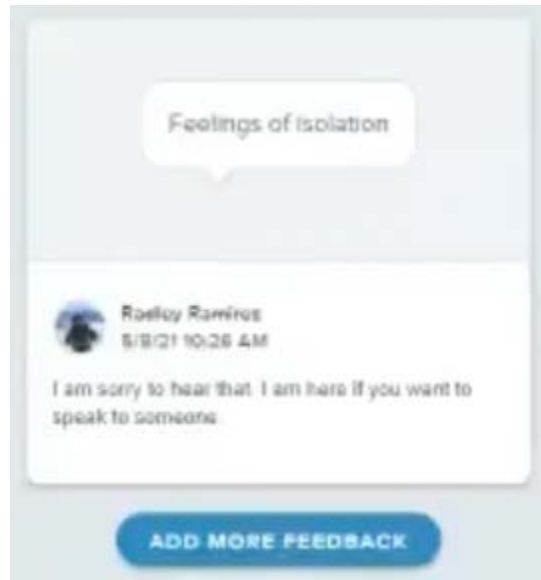
Among other products, Pear Deck has an array of SEL-themed prompts to “check in” with students, which they can answer in real time. The presenter suggests teachers conduct these check-ins every class.

Questions can elicit quantitative responses to get a general idea of a student's feelings:



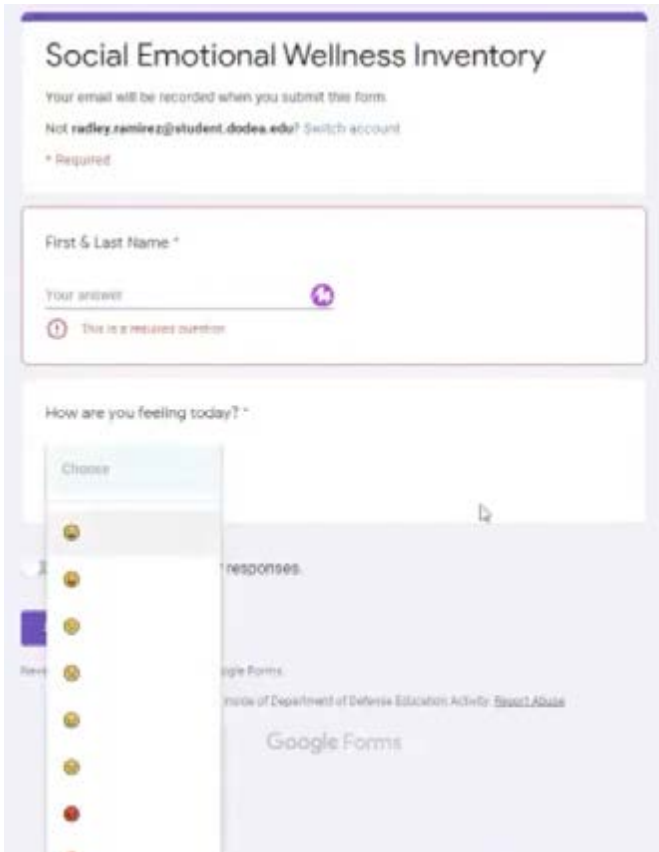
Examples of DoDEA-approved daily check-ins from Pear Deck currently in use at DoDEA schools.

But they can also be open-ended, with an opportunity for teachers to send private messages to students about their feelings.



The presenter demonstrated how a teacher might interact with a student’s answer to questions about how they feel during his presentation.

Google forms are another tool used by DoDEA teachers to conduct a “Social Emotional Wellness Inventory” on students.



Timestamp	Email Address	First & Last Name	How are you feeling today?
3/31/2021 19:00:24	radley.ramirez@student.dodea.edu	Radley Ramirez	😊
4/21/2021 11:25:52	adrian.crawford@student.dodea.edu	Adrian Crawford	😊
4/21/2021 11:27:00	cindy.holland@student.dodea.edu	Cindy Holland	😊
4/21/2021 11:27:14	cindy.holland@student.dodea.edu	Cindy Holland	😊
4/21/2021 11:27:26	cindy.holland@student.dodea.edu	Cindy Holland	😊
4/21/2021 11:35:55	mark.dube@student.dodea.edu	Mark Dube	😊
4/21/2021 11:36:41	michele.dube@student.dodea.edu	Michele Dube	😊
4/21/2021 11:38:30	sara.gambes@student.dodea.edu	Sara Gambes	😊
4/21/2021 11:50:44	meg.dean@student.dodea.edu	Meg Dean	😊
4/21/2021 11:55:20	heather.bohon@student.dodea.edu	Heather Bohon	😊
4/21/2021 11:58:36	carter.huff@student.dodea.edu	Carter Huff	😊
4/21/2021 11:58:43	carter.huff@student.dodea.edu	Carter Huff	😊
4/21/2021 11:58:55	carter.huff@student.dodea.edu	Carter Huff	😊
4/21/2021 13:02:46	roger.jackson@student.dodea.edu	Roger Jackson	😊
4/21/2021 13:03:00	roger.jackson@student.dodea.edu	Roger Jackson	😊
4/21/2021 13:03:34	roger.jackson@student.dodea.edu	Roger Jackson	😊
4/21/2021 13:04:56	roger.jackson@student.dodea.edu	Roger Jackson	😊
4/21/2021 13:20:38	michele.hustable@student.dodea.edu	Michele Hustable	😊
4/21/2021 14:49:50	adrian.crawford@student.dodea.edu	Adrian Crawford	😊
4/21/2021 14:49:33	adrian.crawford@student.dodea.edu	Adrian Crawford	😊
4/22/2021 9:28:02	david.becher@student.dodea.edu	David Becher	😊
4/22/2021 9:28:15	david.becher@student.dodea.edu	David Becher	😊
4/22/2021 9:29:06	david.becher@student.dodea.edu	David Becher	😊
4/27/2021 7:51:44	jill.harris@student.dodea.edu	Boss Hogg	😊
4/27/2021 7:52:04	jill.harris@student.dodea.edu	Boss Hogg	😊
4/27/2021 7:52:21	jill.harris@student.dodea.edu	Boss Hogg	😊
5/2/2021 12:44:16	radley.ramirez@student.dodea.edu	Radley Ramirez	😊
5/8/2021 10:32:46	dan.patritz@student.dodea.edu	Dan Patritz	😊
5/8/2021 10:32:54	kevin.schiele@student.dodea.edu	Kevin Schiele	😊
5/8/2021 10:33:25	calatha.ellis@student.dodea.edu	Calatha Ellis	😊

A screenshot from Equity and Access presentation “Social and Emotional Wellness Inventory Technology Tools.”

The presenter explained that information collected from students will be stored in perpetuity. He did not mention if parents or students themselves will have access to the data collected but did say that teachers or school administrators could use the data to evaluate individual students or “see trends” in emotional states for an entire class.

A tenth-grade teacher could, theoretically, go back to see the emotional notes and fears hit by a third grader.

It’s hard to see how that would be useful, easy to see how it could be abused, and obvious to imagine how it could be exploited by hackers for blackmail and phishing purposes.

COST AND DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS

Since 2020, DoDEA has spent \$387,383 on Pear Deck software subscription contracts, the most [recent](#) running until September 2024.

DoDEA schools run on Google Workspace for Education, \$5,405,125 has been spent on Google Workspace contracts.

The agency also offers Chromebooks—which run Google operating systems—to [every](#) DoDEA student and has spent \$29,134,228 on the tech since 2016.

However, concerns with software and technology go beyond costs.

Not only does Google have access to data on DoDEA student’s day-to-day internet activities when using the Google Workspace for Education products, but we know from the DoDEA Equity and Access Summit that 1) student emotional states are being recorded all day long and 2) teachers are being encouraged to provoke student emotions.

Google Classroom is also a repository for a child’s “affirmed name,” or name aligned with a transgender identity. A [policy](#) at DoDEA instituted in March of 2024, advocated for by the “LGBTQ+” advocacy group [Modern Military Association of America](#), only needs a student to ask an administrator for a name to be changed within 24 hours on the Google Classroom system.

Some parents have taken issue with Google’s access to their children’s data and are fighting back.

A city in Denmark made headlines in 2022 for banning Google products from their schools out of concerns for data collection of students. The city, like DoDEA, provided Google Chromebooks for their students to use in their coursework.

Parents wanted more clarity on how Google collects and uses data created by their students.

One Danish parent said in a [Wired article](#) about the incident: “I hope [the ban] spreads, as we are giving too much information to multinational corporations, who by their very nature are untrustworthy.”

A Danish consultant focused on privacy in education was also quoted: “If you know the zip code of an individual, if you know their economic output, if you know their birthday, what their behavior is when they go from Amazon to Disney to Walmart to Target, guess what? Your prediction ability is huge.”

Information we collect as you use core services

As described fully in Google’s [Cloud Privacy Notice](#), we also collect service data through the core services, including:

- **Your account information**, which includes things like name and email address.
- **Your activity while using the core services**, which includes things like viewing and interacting with content, people with whom you communicate or share content, and other details about your usage of the services.
- **Your settings, apps, browsers & devices**. We collect info about your settings and the apps, browsers, and devices you use to access our services. This information includes browser and device type, settings configuration, unique identifiers, operating system, mobile network information, and application version number. We also collect information about the interaction of your apps, browsers, and devices with our services, including IP address, crash reports, system activity, and the date and time of your request.
- **Your location information**. We collect info about your location as determined by various technologies such as IP address.
- **Your direct communications**. We keep records of communications when you or your admin provide feedback, ask questions, or seek technical support.
- And for admins, we collect data about payments and transactions.

Service data is used to deliver and maintain the services that schools and students use, as well as to improve the security and reliability of these services. To make these improvements we use aggregated Service Data to resolve technical issues, keep our security measures robust and up-to-date, and ensure that the services work as intended. If you choose to provide feedback through the services, we may use that feedback for a wider range of improvements to the services; however, any feedback you provide is entirely voluntary and you can use the services without providing any.

Some of the information Google Workspace for Education collects on students and teachers, from [Google Workspace for Education Privacy Notice](#).

In February of this year a Danish regulator ruled that cities in Denmark need more information about how Google is using the data children generate, according to an article in [The Verge](#). The article stated that privacy issues could still be a problem even if Google is collecting data for performance analytics or feature development, especially if data is being collected to develop AI features.

Because of the sensitive nature of the data being collected, more sunshine needs to be shed on how Google is using data collected from DoDEA schools, and which agency staffers have access to this data.


CASE STUDY: BRAIN GAUGE

While some parents may find the constant monitoring of their child’s emotions via SEL initiatives invasive, at least one DoDEA school staffer hopes to take mental health evaluation a step further by scanning the brains of children.

During the Equity and Access Summit a guidance counselor who had previously worked as a neuroscientist suggested combining data collected from student surveys on SEL with data taken from measurements of their brain activity.

Next Steps for the upcoming SY 21/22

1. Replicate Survey with student developed questionnaire on SEL concerns
2. SOS intervention within first month of school to entire student body
3. Expand on Upstander training to include facilitated communication as well as emotional first aid, and active listening.
4. Pre-Post survey delivery within Health courses to 280+ students together with in-service training courses w/MFLC and community resource (LRMC) support on: Stress Management, Sleep Hygiene, Nutrition, Anxiety and Anger Management, Coping Skills/Relaxation.
5. Student option to use Objective Brain Gauge Device for tracking objective measures of brain health.



Slide from “[Upstanders Program - Peer Facilitated Support](#)” by a DoDEA guidance counselor outlining her hopes for the new year. It is unclear if these programs had been implemented since then.

The guidance counselor had used a brain-imaging device in her clinical research the year previously and thought it would be great to use in schools:

“This device is developed by a company called Cortical Metrics, and this offers the individual the ability to understand how they’re functioning, how their brain is actually performing... and so [students] actually can see from not only subjective data with respect to the surveys of what the students are telling us about what their concerns are, but objective data. And if I put that in the hands of the kids where they can map themselves, where they can see, ‘hey you know what, I was up all weekend doing homework, I’d be curious to see how well my brain is functioning right now.’”

This quote was in the context of the negative effects of sleep deprivation, but it is obvious how the technology could be used to inappropriately pre-diagnose or otherwise encourage children to fixate on mental health conditions.

Brain Gauge device for whole brain health

1. Study conducted at LRMC from 2018-2020 on mapping brain health following concussion.
2. Functional brain health impacted by sleep deprivation looks a lot like concussion.
3. May help students to understand the real-life practical impacts of behaviors on their health



dodea
EUROPE

Slide from "Upstanders Program- Peer Facilitated Support" on mapping brain health.

In December 2022 OpenTheBooks.com sent a Freedom of Information Act request for emails sent to or from the guidance counselor containing the term "Cortical Metrics" between May 2021 and September 2022.

DoDEA acknowledged such emails did exist but refused to release them, citing privacy concerns. OpenTheBooks appealed this decision in March 2023. DoDEA estimated that a decision would be made by the end of July 2024—one and a half years after our initial request.

The extreme length of time to process FOIAs and appeals highlights the difficulty of providing oversight to this agency.

CASE STUDY: TUTOR.COM

In February of this year, Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) [raised the alarm](#) about another education company Department of Defense contractor—Tutor.com. The company is owned by the Hong Kong-based Primavera Capital Group, which has also funded TikTok, another giant Chinese tech company.

According to a [letter](#) Cotton sent to DoD Secretary Lloyd Austin, Primavera acquired Tutor.com in January 2022. Cotton wrote:

"While providing educational services, Tutor.com collects personal data on users, such as location, internet protocol addresses, and contents of the tutoring sessions. As Chinese national security laws require companies to release confidential business and customer data to the Chinese government, we are paying to expose our military and their children's private information to the Chinese Communist Party."

The 2021 Equity and Access Summit featured a lunch break sponsored by Tutor.com. Staff were provided [resources](#) on how they and their students could use the services. It is unclear how much stored data was passed along during the sale, or what data was used for under previous ownership.

12:00-12:50
CEST

LUNCH PARTY WITH [TUTOR.COM](https://www.tutor.com)

[WATCH HERE](#)

Materials: [Tutor.com/military](https://www.tutor.com/military) [Resources](#)

Session Feedback: [Session Feedback Form](#)

While children of service members can benefit from Tutor.com services, DoDEA does not contract with Tutor.com itself. Sister organization the U.S. Department of Defense Morale, Welfare, and Recreation General Library Program holds the Tutor.com contract. Spending on this contract is not available at USAspending.gov, the federal checkbook.

Senator Cotton asked for spending data and other information on the DoD’s relationship with the company in his letter to Secretary Austin.



CASE STUDY: TEACHER STRUGGLE SESSIONS

While children are the most sympathetic victims of this pernicious pedagogy, DoDEA staffers are also given books and other materials exposing them to radical, mind-bending ideologies paired with “difficult conversations” and calls to action.

How to Be an Antiracist

As first described in “Grooming Future Revolutionaries,” two elementary school teachers discussed their own DoDEA-facilitated professional development reading group in “[REDI for a Change: Antiracism in Action.](#)”

The educators were a part of a “book study” to learn the basics of antiracism and seek “ways to change” institutions and themselves. The study focused on Ibram Kendi’s *How to Be an Antiracist*. A teacher-presenter explained:

“In our book study at EU West [a DoDEA administrative region], which, it really wasn’t a book study, it was more of a course with actions attached to it and seeking for ways to change--but first we had to look at ourselves, really with DEI now, or REDI, it all starts with you, and your minute reactions, second reactions when you’re presented with difficult situations where you need to speak up or might not speak up.”

One session participant reflected on her past transgressions:

“I think inaction is something I didn’t realize that I was doing...I realized maybe even though I thought I was openly antiracist, maybe I wasn’t actively antiracist.”

A teacher concurred, “I was reading *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad this summer, and she talks about white silence, and I realized the damage I was doing by my white silence.”

The video is cut short when presenters remember they do not want their session to be recorded, and viewers are left to wonder what else is being said in these DEI conversations facilitated by DoDEA.

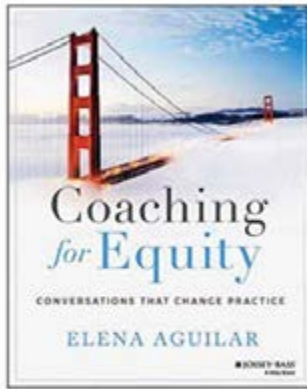
Coaching for Equity

OpenTheBooks.com sent a Freedom of Information Act request for DEI personal development content offered to DoDEA employees between 2020 and 2022. The [production](#) included a slide from a presentation promoting *Coaching for Equity*, a book offering “strategies for talking about race, power, and systems of oppression which lead to changes in a teacher’s practice.”

This book, which can only be described as emotionally abusive, is what DoDEA thinks is appropriate for teachers to be reading and internalizing as professional development.

Auditors at OpenTheBooks.com read *Coaching for Equity* to understand the sort of content DoDEA believes is important for achieving the agency’s DEI goals.

Along with rebukes of capitalism, “patriarchy,” traditions like Thanksgiving, and America’s existence as a country (founded on “stolen land”), the book follows a “coach,” the author, over several sessions discussing “equitable” classroom instruction with a young white teacher.



GET A COPY

Coaching for Equity: Conversations that Change Practice

If we are going to interrupt educational inequities and create schools in which every child thrives, we must refine our conversation skills. *Coaching for Equity* offers extensive strategies for talking about race, power, and systems of oppression, strategies which lead to changes in a teacher's practice. This book is for teachers, leaders, and coaches who accept responsibility for interrupting inequities in schools and who want to build the knowledge and skills to coach for equity.

Coaching for Equity contains an updated Transformational Coaching framework and the tools and rubrics that are necessary to implement this model of coaching. In addition, personal narratives demonstrate what coaching for equity looks like and help us see how we can make every conversation count towards building a more just and equitable world.

Coaching for Equity covers key topics in the larger societal conversation surrounding equity, including:

- understanding what equity is and what it should look like in your school
- recognizing and preventing inequities in the classroom and school community
- realizing the path that created inequitable environments in your school
- making changes that contribute to an equitable environment
- raising awareness for issues of inequity

Page from FOIA production for DEI professional development material at DODEA. FOIA documents are often produced without context, so it is difficult to know when or where this book was presented.

The teacher, “Stephanie,” cries many times, overwhelmed with her new job teaching in a high-poverty school. The author often expresses annoyance and fatigue with her client. At one point Stephanie asks the author if she, Stephanie, is a racist. The author says yes, asks Stephanie if she is “ready to explore the ways you’ve unconsciously acted on racist beliefs,” and later laments that a teacher of a different race did not have Stephanie’s job instead.

The book ends by telling school leaders to advocate for “systems change” and gives a book list of titles such as *Me and White Supremacy*, *White Fragility*, *Dying of Whiteness*, and *The 1619 Project*.

Professional Development Learning Standards

The DoDEA DEI Department was dismantled, but teachers are still learning neo-Marxist principles of “equity” and being urged to confront their supposed biases through DoDEA’s professional learning standards.

DoDEA officials **told** the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that “a consistent approach to professional learning helps ensure educational continuity for DODEA’s mobile student population.”

To do that, DoDEA relies on a professional development framework published by Learning Forward.

In 2022 Learning Forward rolled out new education standards centered heavily on “equity,” because, **according to** Learning Forward communications director Tracy Crow, “the current global crisis lays bare the long-standing structural and societal inequities that are barriers to high-quality teaching and learning for all children”

Equity is now named in four out of eleven of Learning Forward’s new standards.



The standards encourage struggle sessions like those found in Coaching for Equity. The description of the [“Equity Drivers”](#) standard says in part:

“Educators discuss instances of privilege and bias in their day-to-day experiences and articulate their own assumptions about key concepts like equality and fairness.... They implement and model norms that encourage educators to reflect on how their own privilege, race, and class might be impacting their mindsets, practices, and expectations of themselves and each other.”

Educators use their knowledge about privilege, power, historical biases, and institutional racism to communicate about their own experiences.”

In general, the equity standards ask teachers to fixate on their own, their colleagues, and their students’ “identities” to understand the various systemic “barriers” individuals face. According to the [“Equity Foundations”](#) standard:

“Educators study how barriers related to all aspects of student and educator identity limit access and opportunity for learning that fosters excellence within and beyond schools and in a range of learning contexts.”

Equity Foundations further urges educators to advocate for “equitable” policies in whatever context—education and beyond; “Educators explore how education is funded and its connections to other elemental aspects of society, including health care, childcare, housing, and the workforce.”

The GAO report [“Teachers General Responded Positively to Professional Learning at DOD Schools”](#) surveys teachers from 2017-2021, before the new standards were implemented. The previous framework did not name “equity” as a core standard.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

Compared to SEL, DoDEA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practices have been far more rigorously reported on and addressed on the national stage.

The Equity and Access Summit showed teachers eager to discuss sexuality and gender ideology with children, revealed teaching training materials meant to make children cry, and classroom content explicitly intended to turn students into social justice activists.

Follow-up [research](#) showed extremist content in school libraries and curriculums, making a hostile environment for both students and staff.

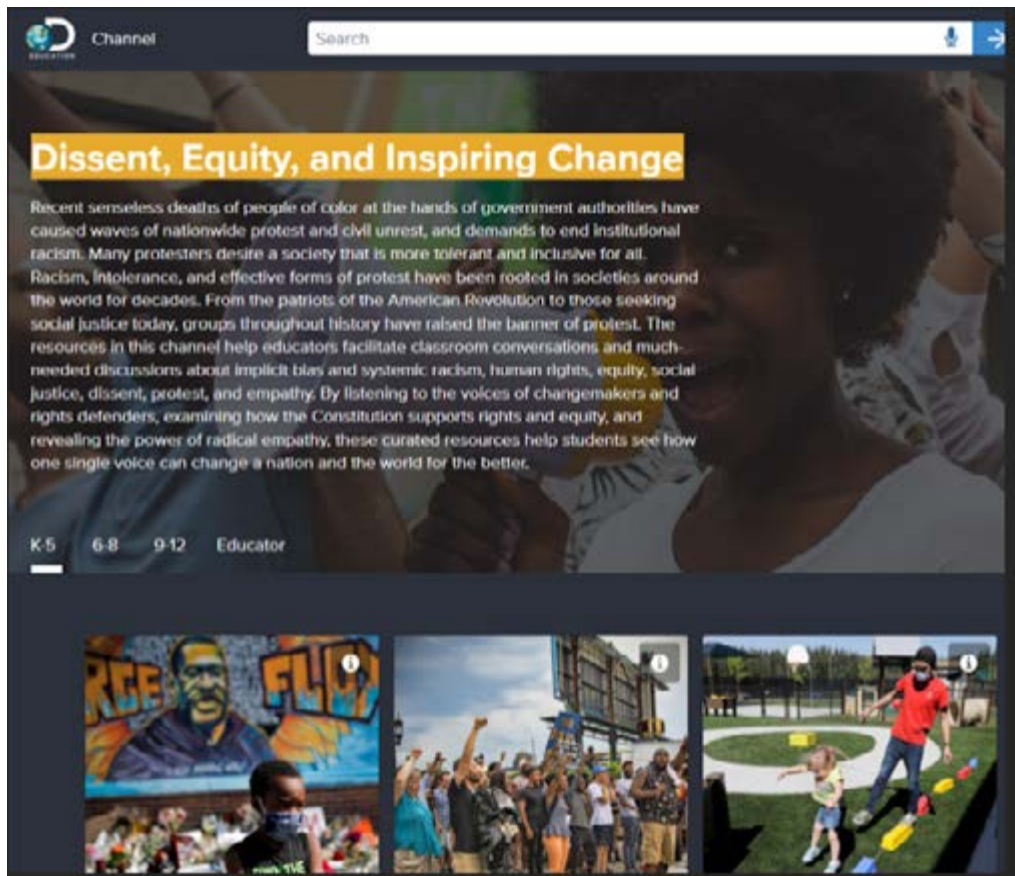
Despite the disbandment of the DEI department at DoDEA, there is no reason to think these practices are not continuing.

KNOWN DEI-RELATED VENDORS

In February 2023 OpenTheBooks.com published a [report](#) describing some of the vendors used to facilitate DEI-related curriculum that are still getting funding from the agency, including:

Discovery Education: A media platform with videos and other content touching on various educational themes. One DE "channel" recommended by DoDEA staff is called "Dissent, Equity, and Inspiring Change," which is intended to "help educators facilitate classroom conversations and much-needed discussions about implicit bias and systemic racism, human rights, equity, social justice, dissent, protest, and empathy."

From 2019 through 2023 DoDEA spent \$2,410,603 for Discovery Education product licenses.



Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID): The tutoring company is a major part of student life at DoDEA. During the Equity and Access Summit AVID instructors presented concepts like “power” and “privilege” and discussed lesson plans to drive home these ideas to students.

The company further posted statements of “solidarity” with radical group Black Lives Matter, and AVID instructors suggested teachers use the “Let’s Talk!” [handbook](#) from the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Learning for Justice program to facilitate radical classroom conversations.

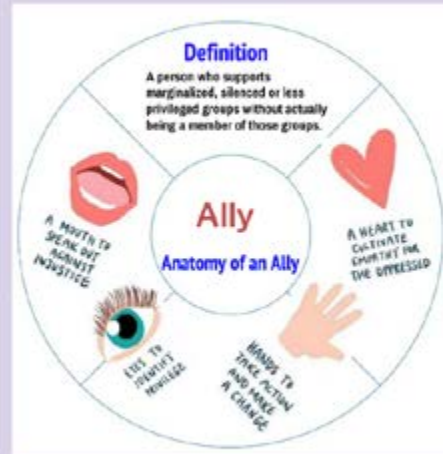
From 2019 through 2023 DoDEA spent \$1,913,073 on AVID contracts.

Mandala Model—Instructional Practice Description, Models, Template

TERM: Ally

Defined: A person who supports marginalized, silenced or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups.

An ally will often directly confront and challenge systems of oppression; e.g., a man who lobbies for equal pay for women. An ally can be a member of the advantaged group who works to dismantle oppression from which s/he benefits. Allies recognize the relative and unearned privilege or power they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Allies include men who work to end sexism, white people who work to end racism, heterosexual people who work to end heterosexism, and so on.



Slide defining the word ally from Equity and Access summit presentation "[REDI to Learn? Building a Common Language](#)." A "privileged" person acting on behalf of "the oppressed" is called an "ally."

The presenter, an Instructional Systems Specialist for AVID, suggested students can make the graphic on the right as a part of an in-class activity: "Here's the anatomy of an ally using clip art. This could be done remotely or in brick and mortar, or for those students who really appreciate and are skilled in drawing, this is a great way for them to develop those additional talents to deepen their understanding of an ally."

Schoology: A learning management software intended to help kids and teachers keep track of their homework, quizzes, and grades. Equity and Access Summit teachers also recommended using the app to facilitate secret chatrooms around sexuality and gender topics, outside of the eyes of parents.

From 2019 through 2023 DoDEA spent \$1,487,296 on Schoology and parent company PowerSchool contracts.

OTHER CURRICULUM VENDORS

The glimpse the Equity and Access Summit gave into DoDEA's DEI operations is invaluable; it is often impossible to get content from contractors through Freedom of Information Act requests because they are subject to copyright protections.

Auditors have identified many other curriculum providers at DoDEA.

Payments from 2019-2023 include:

- Mackin Book Company: \$18,463,138
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co.: \$17,339,001
- McGraw Hill: \$10,093,136
- Benchmark Education Company: \$9,908,447
- Carnegie Learning: \$9,876,298
- Cengage Learning: \$6,735,297
- Teachers Curriculum Institute: \$5,035,173
- Pearson Education Holdings: \$1,819,362
- The Prophet Corporation: \$1,539,732
- Kaplan Early Learning Company: \$1,366,032
- Aletheia Solutions: \$1,251,086
- Savvas Learning Co.: \$1,153,434
- Edgenuity: \$1,033,050
- The Goodheart-Willcox Company: \$1,029,542
- Editorial Edinumen: \$876,015
- Curriculum Associates: \$845,132
- Children's Health Market: \$842,067
- Smithsonian Institution: \$732,913
- Lego Systems: \$671,225
- Riverside Community Care: \$501,740

We encourage whistleblowers who have access to these resources to reach out to OpenTheBooks.com to report radical materials.

Some resources have already been shown to be controversial. For example:

The Goodheart-Willcox Company: \$1,029,542

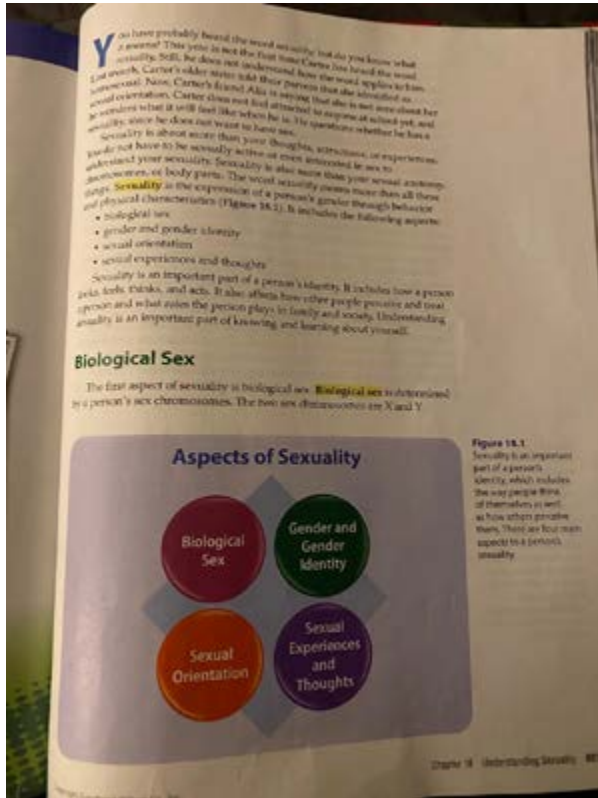
Goodheart-Willcox's *Comprehensive Health Skills for Middle School* is [used](#) across DoDEA for health education. Military spouse and military family advocate Amy Haywood [posted](#) content from the book on X featuring a lesson "sexuality."

According to the book, there are four main aspects of sexuality:

- Biological Sex
- Gender and Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Sexual Experiences and Thoughts

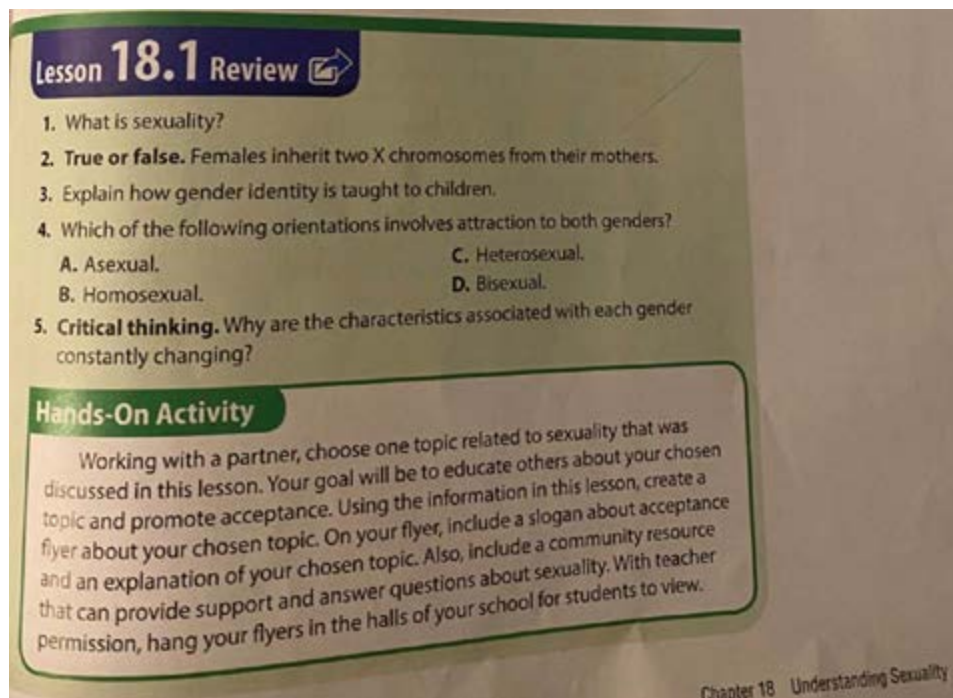
The book notes "understanding sexuality is an important part of knowing and learning about yourself."

Another lesson on "gender identity" states that "gender" is not biological, but is socialized from birth, and that "people also have the power to choose a gender identity."



Pictures of lessons in Goodheart-Willcox's Comprehensive Health Skills for Middle School, originally posted on X by Amy Haywood

Yet another lesson asks students to “choose one topic related to sexuality that was discussed in this lesson” and then “educate others about your chosen topic” by creating a flyer to hang in the hall of the school.



Picture of lesson in Goodheart-Willcox's Comprehensive Health Skills for Middle School, originally posted on X by Amy Haywood

A DoDEA middle school teacher **noted** in a presentation called “Integrating Global Citizenship Education and Social Justice Standards” that SPLC’s resources aligned with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework DoDEA **uses** to teach history and social studies:

“The Learning for Justice website [a project of SPLC] provides numerous resources available to you. One of these resources is the Social Justice Standards. They provide a roadmap to develop anti-bias education for every grade level and focus on four domains: Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action...The lessons offered on this website provide strategies that align with our C3 standards for different grade levels. I have personally completed many of these lessons offered.”

In June 2024 SPLC announced layoffs that its union **said** would be “functionally eliminating the Learning for Justice department.” But the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework at DoDEA will remain for the foreseeable future.

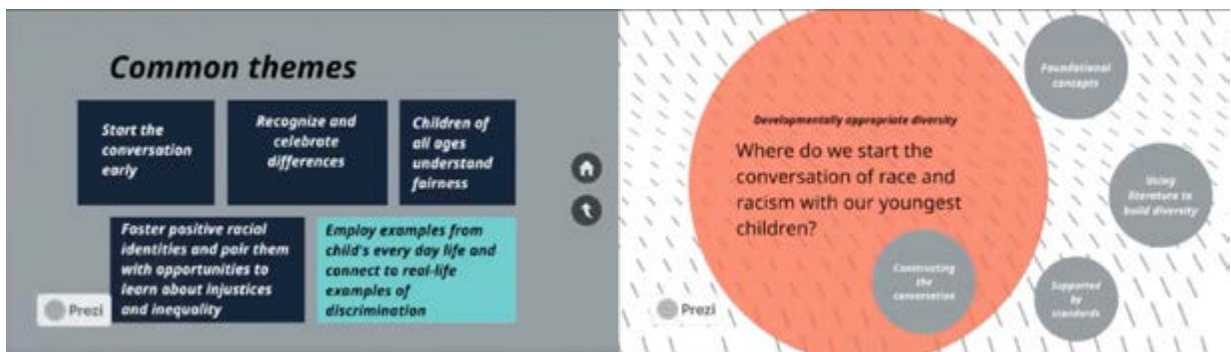


Slide from presentation “This is Us” showing DoDEA social studies and literacy standards that can be used to introduce DEI concepts to children.

Another presentation called “[This is Us](#)” by an English as a Second Language elementary school instructor, also suggested using standards to add DEI and SEL concepts to lesson plans:

“When we came together as a group and discussed how are we going to start introducing [DEI concepts] into classrooms and teachers and students; we know teachers are super, super busy...So one of the ways that we figured that we could probably get into classrooms is that we thought about taking a look at the standards and how can we take the standards and build off of those foundational skills to begin addressing [DEI concepts].

It made it a lot easier when we approached a teacher and was like ‘hey I know the student’s next unit is about this or that, and I would like to point out a way to discuss identity or diversity, equity and inclusion or any of those things in your classroom and apply it to that.’ The moment that you can talk about how you can address one of their standards, teachers are a little bit more open to it.”



Screenshots from Equity and Access presentation “[This is Us: An Elementary School Identifies Content and Practices to Promote DEI.](#)” Advice shared includes talking about “injustice” and “groups of people who have been discriminated against” to “spark their passion to stand up for others.”

CASE STUDY: DEI IN CLASSROOM BOOKS

DoDEA libraries have a huge array of radical books available for children to check out. Fox News Digital [reported](#) controversial titles involving sexual themes, gender ideology, and even pornographic scenes like the now-infamous pages of Gender Queer.

Fox News Digital also [found](#) radical texts pushing ahistorical, anti-American narratives that paint the nation as “systemically racist,” like *White Fragility*, and *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*. Books with sexual and “anti-racist” themes were available from grades kindergarten up. When asked about these books, a DoDEA spokesperson said they were included in libraries because of “diversity:”

“The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) serves a diverse community of military families, and their library materials reflect that diversity. All titles in DODEA’s catalog undergo a review process. We welcome parents to review DODEA library materials and there is an administrative process available if a parent has concerns about a particular book.”

In 2023 OpenTheBooks.com [discovered](#) 606 copies of then-DEI chief Kelisa Wing’s children’s books in 49 DoDEA schools, including titles like “What is White Privilege” and “What is Anti-Racism.”

But even this wide array of options might not be enough for teachers at DoDEA.

As first reported in “Grooming Future Revolutionaries,” teachers frustrated with the limited options are encouraged to use their own story time and classroom libraries to expand the extremist content available to students.

Great books to encourage discussions with students: *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds is awesome. I did a book study with some High School girls. Also, Ibram Kendi did a children’s book *Andi-Racist Baby*

The report noted that in a presentation called “[Enriching Read Aloud and Independent Reading through the Use of Current and Diverse Children’s Literature](#),” a middle school teacher said her colleagues “don’t have a lot of control over the texts that are chosen,” but they “do have some influence” over the books they choose “for read-aloud...independent reading, book clubs, literature circles...We still have a lot of room for getting the right book in their hands when they need it.”

A comment a teacher posted in an interactive session during the presentation “[‘REDI’ for Change: Antiracism in Action](#),” demonstrating how teachers can introduce radical ideology to their students outside of a standard curriculum.

The sentiment was echoed in the “[Ally 101](#)” presentation, with a middle school teacher saying:

“Using diverse and inclusive books in your classroom and school libraries; this is a huge one for me as a language arts teacher...I wish I was at school now because I have a massive classroom library and I have a ton of books that have main characters who are everywhere on the [gender and sexuality] spectrum and off the spectrum.”

Despite the supposed disbandment of DoDEA's DEI department, this practice is on-going today. A DoDEA parent [recently took](#) to X to complain about her middle school child being made to choose a book authored by a "person of color" from the teacher's classroom library. Her son ended up choosing *Elatsoe*, a book about an asexual main character.

When she complained to the principal about this book being given to her son, the principal defended the book as a means to give students "an opportunity to interact with text from a variety of authors with a variety of backgrounds."

THE REAL BOOK BANNERS

Along with stocking classroom and school libraries with radical content, DoDEA teachers and administrators are interested in removing time-honored children's books now deemed problematic.

While libraries have always been subject to curation decisions based on community preferences, parents objecting to pornographic materials in their schools today have been accused to "book banning" by leftist politicians and their media allies.

But radical teachers have been conducting their own "book banning" campaigns. Case in point: Dr. Seuss.

Adding in antiracist texts goes hand in hand with evaluating classics and removing those if they no longer fit DEI goals.

Dr. Seuss came under fire in 2020 when activists denounced the author's complicated artistic [history](#) as he drew racial caricatures in political cartoons while also advocating against Jim Crow laws.

In 2021 the National Education Association, the teacher's union [affiliated](#) with DoDEA, distanced itself from Dr. Seuss to pivot to more "diverse" books in its Read Across America programming.

Read Across America originally focused on Dr. Seuss books and was held around the author's birthday.

DoDEA teachers followed NEA's suit. During the ["REDI' for a Change: Antiracism in Action"](#) presentation, a teacher discussed the "uncomfortable" process of removing Dr. Seuss from area schools:

"The situation with Dr. Seuss—this year I sent an email to people who wanted to read a book to us, we had people who wanted to read virtually or recorded, and I asked them not to read anything by Dr. Seuss, and...I explained why Dr. Seuss was not appropriate to read to our students, and it was very uncomfortable because I didn't come out and say he was a racist, but I had to explain that he's not a comfortable person to read because of his behaviors.

I thought I would get backlash for that, because it's Dr. Seuss week, even one of the schools in our area called it Dr. Seuss Week, and I went to her and I said, 'it's not really Dr. Seuss Week, it's Read Across America and this is why,' and she was dead set on her, 'it's Dr. Seuss Week, we're not supporting racism, we're supporting what Dr. Seuss wrote,' and trying to explain that to someone, it's just very uncomfortable."



A slide from presentation "Embarking on our REDI Journey" showing a Read Across America program at a DoDEA elementary school. Note the picture book C is for Country by Lil Nas X, a rapper famous for sexually explicit content who also designed "Satan shoes" containing human blood.



SPENDING

DoDEA's enacted budget for FY 2023 was \$2,257,081,000.

YEAR	BUDGET
2017	\$1,908,421
2018	\$1,899,708
2019	\$1,992,473
2020	\$2,048,693
2021	\$2,064,216
2022	\$2,234,464
2023	\$2,257,081

Amounts represented are in thousands.

DoDEA budget from 2017-2023. Data from Congressional Justification reports. Totals are not adjusted for inflation.

According to a Freedom of Information Act request, staff payroll makes up more than half of spending (\$1.3 billion in FY 2022). Auditors at OpenTheBooks.com were unable to get individual salary data from DoDEA, unlike nearly every other federal agency (available to search on our website).

2022 PAYROLL COST BY EXPENDITURE

NAME	SUM OF AMOUNT
BASE PAY	\$834,476,413
BENEFITS	\$307,166,046
CASH AWARDS	\$15,745,390
COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT	\$61,189,296
EXTRA DUTY	\$13,858,157
HOLIDAY	\$741,677
LIVING QUARTERS ALLOWANCE	\$121,645,710
OVERTIME	\$865,855
SUNDAY PAY	\$312,963
OTHER	\$2,819,535
SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS	\$3,743,339
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,362,564,380

Payroll cost provided by DoDEA via FOIA

CONTRACTS

Contract spending has stayed even since 2017 at about \$300 million a year. Recent contract spending examples include Google Chrome-book, Discovery Education, Pear Deck, and others highlighted in this report.

YEAR	BUDGET
2017	\$248,564,055
2018	\$268,589,193
2019	\$303,892,151
2020	\$285,815,806
2021	\$234,503,545
2022	\$333,280,748
2023	\$294,288,029
TOTAL	\$1,968,933,527

DoDEA contract spending FY 2017-2023

GRANTS

DoDEA’s grant funding is targeted towards building educational programs within schools affiliated with military-connected children. Yearly spending in this category has roughly doubled since 2021.

YEAR	BUDGET
2017	\$36,876,000
2018	\$36,122,355
2019	\$21,645,773
2020	\$20,652,430
2021	\$46,266,026
2022	\$63,067,590
2023	\$73,179,351
TOTAL	\$297,809,525

DoDEA grant spending FY 2017-2023

Grants are largely spent to create programs related to math, science, literacy, health, languages and “social emotional learning” at domestic DoDEA-affiliated schools. These programs are often internal, with curriculum and outcomes unavailable online, making oversight difficult.

Relevant spending will be discussed in greater depth throughout the report.

SCHOOL	FUNDING
HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAWAII	\$11,743,715
ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD FLORIDA	\$6,418,809
CLOVER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT WASHINGTON	\$5,740,521
BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEBRASKA	\$6,300,000
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FLORIDA	\$5,740,521
FORT LEAVENWORTH USD #207 KANSAS	\$5,500,000
FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS VIRGINIA	\$5,499,999.98
CORONADO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CALIFORNIA	\$5,342,518
ENTERPRISE BOARD OF EDUCATION ALABAMA	\$4,750,000
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT 2 SOUTH CAROLINA	\$4,500,000
RANDOLPH FIELD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL TEXAS	\$4,000,000
KNOB NOSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT R 8 MISSOURI	\$4,000,000
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF TEXAS, INC. TEXAS	\$4,000,000
SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CALIFORNIA	\$3,999,996
DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MISSOURI	\$3,997,490

Top 15 school organizations receiving DoDEA grants, and their states, 2019-2023

Windows into the Pandemic at DoDEA

\$5.2 million in grants were produced since 2022 to address learning loss during the pandemic. Grant proposals can be a window into broader school climate, and those addressing COVID fallout seem particularly grim. Quotes from grant proposals include:

- “[We are plagued](#) by the devastating realities of academic gaps in student learning, teacher burnout, and staffing shortages.”
- “[Current student assessment](#) data indicates a loss of learning during the pandemic resulting from high absenteeism and remote learning. Teacher surveys show teachers are stressed, overwhelmed, and not in a good place to address the learning loss.”
- “[Student achievement](#) has not improved substantially following recent school disruption.”
- “[Military connected students](#) experienced a marked decrease in mathematics pass rates for the 2020-2021 school year when compared to pre pandemic levels, and gaps in academic performance are often manifested in disruptive behavior and a lack of readiness to learn.”
- “[Although our schools](#) are returning to normal practices, our students are exhibiting difficulty with executive function, self-regulation, focusing, interpersonal skills, stamina, and academic gaps.”

SPENDING SUMMARY

As far as agency spending goes, DoDEA is a relatively small player. [The Environmental Protection Agency](#) has a budget of \$12 billion. The National Institutes of Health, for example, has an annual budget of \$50 billion. The entire Department of Defense budget is more than \$800 billion.

But the dollars spent on DoDEA have an outsized impact. American servicemembers move frequently. Given their outsized sacrifice on behalf of the country, these men and women and should be able to trust that their children’s education is excellent no matter where in the world they’re stationed.

While it is especially galling to have taxpayer dollars finance projects that negatively impact the mental health and well-being of American schoolchildren, not every resource the teachers use cost money.

Free resources used in teacher training or classrooms, like the radical content from Southern Poverty Law Center that multiple staffers cited during the Summit, can be even more problematic because they do not show up in spending data and don’t have reporting requirements.

This is why improved access to documents and staff communications via FOIA is crucial to shed light on the free resources DoDEA staffers are sharing and discussing.

For example, one free resource recommended multiple times during the Summit was the South Poverty Law Center’s “[Let’s Talk!](#)” handbook, which teachers are supposed to use to make children have “uncomfortable conversations” about race, power, and privilege.

Others recommended by DoDEA staffers include:

disrupttexts.org: One disrupttexts.org [post](#) about “Romeo and Juliet” says:

“As I reflect, this was a good first step for me to disrupt the classics that plague our curriculum. Learning from #DisruptTexts, books like *White Fragility*, and also learning that I have a lot to unlearn, I can begin to recognize my mistakes and also dismantle the framework of privilege that I used to teach from.”

socialjusticebooks.org: A teacher’s recommended resource list included a blog for further reading from this website titled “[Sense of an Ending: Picture Books as an Entry to Activism](#)”

teachingbeyondthebinary.com: Examples of recommended books include:

[Alice Austen Lived Here](#) - A novel for middle schoolers about a “non-binary” teenager “very in touch with their own queer identity,” who resents history class because of the lessons about “Dead Straight Cis White Men.”

[The One True Me and You](#) - A novel for high schoolers featuring a character who is excited to “Try out they/them pronouns to see how it feels.”

[A Color Named Love](#) - A picture book for children in K-3 about a child who has four polyamorous parents.



Logo of socialjusticebooks.org, screenshot from the website.



SOLUTIONS

In December 2024 the National Defense Authorization Act was signed into law by President Joe Biden. The law contains a new “rights” for the parents of children attending DoDEA schools, authored by Representative Elise Stefanik (R-NY) which will go into effect in two years. The rights include, among other items:

- The right to review the curriculum of the school
- The right to know if the school or DoDEA alters the school’s academic standards or learning benchmarks
- The right to review all instructional materials used by their students
- The right to inspect a list of the books and other reading materials contained in the library of the school.

DoDEA will also be required to:

- Notify parents of any medical examinations or screenings the school may administer to their child and receive written consent from parents prior to conducting the examination or screening.
- Notify parents of any medical information that will be collected on their child, receive written parental consent prior to collecting such information, and provide parents an opportunity to inspect such information at the parent’s request.

While these measures are good for military families, there is still much progress to be made. Teacher training, such as the Equity and Access Summit, along with teacher required or suggested reading like *Coaching for Equity* should be included as well.

Library books were already available for parents (and in many cases, members of the public) to review online, but the new “rights” do not include books in classrooms, which teachers admit to stocking with radical books.

The right to review instructional materials and standards changes are welcome, however they offer little recourse for parents who are uncomfortable with those changes. While DoDEA schools abroad do have an “advisory committee” where parents can air concerns, because military families often move every year or two, parents often do not stay long enough to effect real change.

The next “parents bill of rights” at DoDEA must address these issues. Because the agency has lost the trust of the people it serves and cannot be depended on to police the radicals in its ranks, Congress must also extend school choice to DoDEA families.

Military parents can only access funding for private schools if they are stationed somewhere a DoDEA school is not “[reasonably available](#).”

Otherwise, their only options are homeschooling and the public schools of the country where they are stationed, which may not be suitable for children unfamiliar with the local language.

This policy is different from those applied to children of Department of State employees, who can receive tuition funding for local private schools when stationed abroad.

The current administration does not have the will or interest in abolishing DEI and SEL in military schools—quite the opposite.

In his internal email announcing the disbandment of the DEI department, Thomas Brady stated DEI must remain a part of the agency to comply with Biden’s 2021 Executive Order 14035, which among other items charges all agencies with “assessing the current state of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within their workforces.” (Never mind that even before EO 14035, Brady strived to inculcate DEI ideology at the agency, announcing in June 2020 that DEI must be “embedded in everything we do.”)

The next administration must rescind this executive order to benefit both DoDEA and other federal agencies.

On May 13, Thomas Brady [announced](#) he would step away from DoDEA after ten years leading the agency. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, DoDEA’s Chief Academic Advisor (and fellow DEI Steering Committee member), replaced him.

In his outgoing speech to the agency, Brady congratulated himself on instituting academic standards to the school system, and shared his hope that DoDEA schools will add more “mental health assets.”

It is obvious that DoDEA will continue fortifying the agency with DEI and SEL. Strong action must be taken by Congress and the administration to reverse course.

In May of this year Rep. Jim Banks (R-Indiana) proposed multiple relevant amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act, including disbanding DoDEA’s DEI Steering Committee, abolishing SEL in classroom instruction, and proposing a [pilot program](#) for school choice at one DoDEA school.

For the health and wellness of DoDEA students and staff, Congress should work to ensure these amendments pass into law.

The manipulation of young minds is the primary concern over DoDEA’s in-class radicalization, revelations concerning the on-going entrenchment of DEI-principles in DoDEA will rightfully impact military recruitment, and therefore readiness. It is simply too much to ask those in the military to put both their lives and their children’s well-being on the line.

FURTHER READING

["Agitate, Agitate, Agitate"— Military's New Diversity Chief Hawks Books, Advocates "Revolution" In K-12 Schools](#)

OpenTheBooks.Substack.com | October 2022

[Military Stonewalls Investigation Into Controversial Diversity Official Leading K-12 Schools](#)

OpenTheBooks.Substack.com | March 2023

[Pentagon Secretly Institutionalized DEI In Its K-12 Public Schools](#)

OpenTheBooks.Substack.com | February 2024

[Letter to Secretary Lloyd Austin](#)

Rep. Elise Stefanik, Rep. C Scott Franklin, et al. | September 2022

[Grooming Future Revolutionaries](#)

The Claremont Institute Center for the American Way of Life | September 2022

[Kids Must Cry](#)

The American Mind | September 2022

[Pentagon equity chief praises book calling 9/11 first responders 'menaces' as she pushes for 'revolution'](#)

Fox News | October 2022

[DOD is Forging A Woke K-12 Army With Race And Sex Indoctrination In Military Schools](#)

The Federalist | October 2022

[Biden's Pentagon stuffing Stacey Abrams' conspiracy theories and 'anti-historical' history into K-12 schools](#)

Fox News | November 2022

[Pentagon drags out decision after probe into 'woke' diversity chief accused of anti-White people tweets](#)

Fox News | November 2022

[DoDEA sources speak out about woke 'Marxist' indoctrination: 'I'm not a...sexual realignment engineer'](#)

Fox News | January 2023

[DoD schools diversity chief responds to 'racism' claims](#) | Military Times | February 2023

[Military Personnel Subcommittee Hearing: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Impacts to the Department of Defense and the Armed Services](#) | U.S. House Armed Services Committee |

March 2023

[Stefanik Announces Removal of Woke Officer from Military Children's Schools](#)

Rep. Elise Stefanik | March 2023

[Pentagon disbands DEI unit after chief accused of 'racism' against Whites, injects agenda deeper into agency](#) | Fox News | March 2023

[EXCLUSIVE: Anti-Woke Caucus Targets DEI Committee At DOD Primary Schools](#)

Daily Caller | February 2024

[DoD Prompts Gender Dysphoria in Military Kids and Hides Health Records from Parents](#)

The Federalist | April 2024

APPENDIX

This appendix provides more detailed examples of in-classroom practices promoting SEL and DEI principles.

APPENDIX A: THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE

One case discussed during the Equity and Access Summit highlighted how “difficult conversations” intended to encourage activism and “build trust” in the classroom can lead to emotional wellness interventions, and how DoDEA’s recent new academic standards help make this happen.

In her presentation “[Can Second Graders Change the World?](#)” a DoDEA elementary school reading interventionist described DoDEA learning standards modifications to promote “civic action:”

“I was so excited when DoDEA released documents related to the College and Career Ready Standards for Social Studies and History... Look at the three different shifts because these are some pretty big changes, but I’m most interested in number two, ‘foster student inquiry, collaboration and informed action.’”

CCRS- Social Studies and History



- SHIFT #1: Focus on Conceptual Learning
- SHIFT #2: Foster Student Inquiry, Collaboration and Informed Action
- SHIFT #3: Integrate Content and Skills Purposefully



Changes were rolled out for the 2020-2021 school year as an “awareness year,” with full implementation in 2021-2022.

The presenter quoted DoDEA materials encouraging teachers to discuss controversial issues in the classroom, adding:

“It gives us permission that it is important to bring those controversial or ethical issues into the classroom...how we facilitate that discussion is important, that we remain neutral of course, but to facilitate those conversations is something that should be taking place in the classroom.”

Real Issues



“Thoughtful and deliberate classroom engagement related to controversial or ethical issues provides opportunities for elementary students to practice critical thinking skills while examining multiple perspectives.”

- A position statement from the National Council for the Social Studies (as quoted in DoDEA CCRS-Social Studies and History Newsletter)

A slide from “Can Second Graders Change the World?” quoting a DoDEA newsletter. The presenter said this endorsement gives teachers “permission” to engage in discussions in class on controversial topics.

The presenter’s emphasis on remaining neutral is admirable. However, parents might question whether teachers committed to antiracism, DEI, and SEL can facilitate contentious topics with true neutrality.

Indeed, the presenter and a session participant discussed how students can become a “model” citizen—someone who is engaged in social causes.

The teacher participant said:

“We all are aware that America is very much – there’s a lot of rugged individualism in the American story, so engagement in concerning ourselves with the greater good of the community is important.”

The presenter concurred:

“I think our definition of the model citizen is somebody who follows all the rules... But now after learning about this I would say no, I would say someone who looks at the rules, evaluates the rules, and works to change them, to improve them, and make sure every group and voice is heard.”

What sets democratic classrooms apart?



- Critical assessment of dominant perspectives and status quo (historical or current)
- Equitable participation, critical thinking, and free thought from ALL
- Addressing inequity and injustice with action
- Using literacy skills to learn and communicate about relevant issues

Is democracy reflected in MY classroom?



Slide from "Can Second Graders Change the World?" While empowering children to solve real-world problems sounds good, terms such as "inequity" and "injustice" seem to imply a more political agenda.

The presenter went on to describe a "civic action" project she undertook with a second-grade class before working for DoDEA, noting this was a model her DoDEA colleagues could use.

She began the project by asking students an open-ended question: "What worries you?"

Answers from her young class included "choking," "kidnapping," "people getting killed," "recess violence," and "burning down houses."

The presenter then asked her students to vote on the problem they wanted to try to solve for their project.

They chose "people getting killed."

She then asked them why they selected this issue and received responses like: "it is scary when people get killed and it is sad," "I do not want my brother or sister or mom or dad to get killed like my great grandma," and a dramatic recounting of a homeless man murdering a neighborhood girl.

Why did you select this issue?



Slide from “Can Second Graders Change the World?” showing a student’s depiction of a girl’s murder. The drawing was in answer to a question about why the class voted to do a project on “people getting killed.”

The presenter understood that these conversations could cause her students emotional distress and reoriented the class towards a more solution-focused project—how to keep people safe, rather than how to prevent people from getting killed.

Then kids heard from guest speakers, found information on safety online, and presented information in a puppet show.

Afterwards, because the presenter knew students were worried about death, she asked if they wanted “to learn about what happens when someone isn’t kept safe and someone does die?”

In the spirit of democracy, students voted yes, so the presenter acted:

“I brought in some books and made a book basket and had some discussions about multiple perspectives on what happens when someone dies, because there’s a lot of different opinions about where we go when we die, and what you can do, and ways to grieve and healthy things you can do.”

The project highlights potential concerns raised when teachers pursue “difficult conversations:”

Teachers invite children to discuss controversial or sensitive issues, and then supply emotional, or in this case, religious, counseling based on the supposed concerns they unearthed.

APPENDIX B: THE STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER

For many parents, the thought of teachers stepping in to act as therapists might be quite troubling. After all, there are very good reasons why medical ethics prohibit the practice of unlicensed therapy.

But Kaiserslautern High School, located on the Ramstein Air Base in Germany, has taken an even more aggressive approach: deputizing students as mental health social workers.

As discussed in the presentation “Upstanders: Peer to Peer Facilitation of Social Emotional Learning” students are trained to intervene and refer students to school counselors and therapists.

The program is overseen by a school psychiatrist and counselor at the school and uses the [Signs of Suicide \(SOS\)](#), a curriculum developed by nonprofit MindWise to teach students how to identify signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers.

The “Upstanders,” as they’re called, designed their own handbook called “KHS Upstanders’ Guide to Mental Health First Aid” compiling school resources along with various tips for coping with depression, self-harm, and anxiety for peers they believe are distressed.

These students are trained to recommend “self-harming alternatives” such as “snapping a rubber band or hair tie” to their skin, or “exercising until it hurts.”

SELF-HARMING ALTERNATIVES

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- Snapping Rubber Band or Hair Tie to Skin
- Press Ice Cube to Palm or Other Skin
- Exercising Until It Hurts
- Punching Pillow or Mattress

DISTRACT YOURSELF - *Do something engrossing*

- Watch a film, something that might make you laugh or feel good.
- Do some exercise. Exercise boosts brain chemicals such as endorphins and can help you feel better.
- Do something creative. Maybe you can find others ways to express negative emotions such as art, creative writing, making music or dancing.

DO SOMETHING ELSE - *Can you figure out what has bought on the urge to injure yourself? Think about what injuring yourself will help with, and try to fulfil it in a different way, one that isn't harmful.*

- Needing to feel something can be fulfilled by holding ice or touching textures.
- Needing to see blood can be fulfilled by drawing on skin with red ink or paint.
- If you feel the need to punish yourself, try looking for a way to forgive yourself, and do yourself a kindness instead.
- Feeling overwhelmed by negative emotions, and needing to lash out, can be helped by expressing anger against a pillow or a punching bag.

A page from the “KHS Upstanders’ Guide to Mental Health First Aid.”

“Building trust,” an essential component of DEI and SEL pedagogy, is embedded into the Upstanders program; Upstanders participated in an “equine learning” activity to learn the basics.

A student co-presenter said:

“We learned that the animals also needed to build trust before they could engage in any activities with us, so we implemented that same concept with the school and realized that students need to build trust with other students in order to get that help and do that activity with the counseling team.”

After completing training, Upstanders remain vigilant for peers they believe are emotionally unwell in order to “gain their trust” and connect them to “trusted adults,” meaning school staffers.

An Upstander said meetings with counselors at her school increased because of the program, adding “once you build that trust and those connections and relationships you can teach [students] to be comfortable with getting help and getting the treatment that they need.”

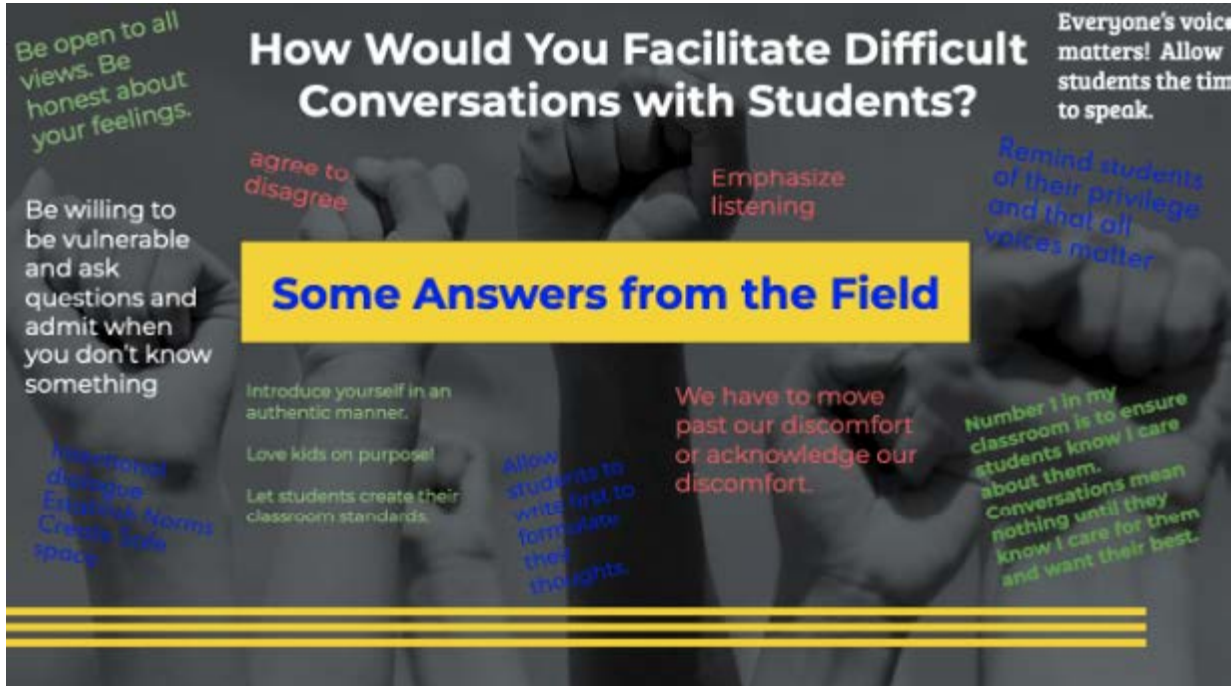
Presenters did not discuss the nature of the mental and emotional health services provided by the “trusted adults.”

The KHS guidance counselor giving the presentation mentioned that the school was able to provide a high level of medical care, saying “we are able to facilitate our in-school mental health collaboration with Landstuhl Regional Medical Center so students can be seen here on site with their treating physicians as needed.”

The level of parental involvement once these services are engaged was not discussed during the presentation.

APPENDIX C: CLASS DISCUSSIONS

The following are slides or other resources from DoDEA staffers at the Equity and Access Summit concerning how to facilitate “difficult conversations” on race, gender, sexuality, privilege and other DEI and SEL topics.



How DoDEA teachers facilitate difficult conversations with students after they “open themselves up,” from the #Justice4All presentation. Note the comment “remind[ing] students of their privilege.”

<p>REDI Prompts*</p> <p><i>*Prompts to be used after establishing a climate & culture of trust. Reinforce the purpose of initial conversations which should be to explore, to listen and to learn from each other. Agree to encourage dialogue, mutual respect, and deep listening to what others share</i></p> <p><i>Questions adapted from Raceforward.org</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “the hard part about talking about race/racism is...” (Use as a potential way to open up the conversation about race/racism) 2. How often do you think about your racial or ethnic identity? 3. What aspect of your racial or ethnic identity makes you the proudest? 4. Have you ever experienced a situation where your racial or ethnic identity seemed to contribute to a problem or uncomfortable situation? 5. Have you ever witnessed someone being treated unfairly because of their racial or ethnic identity? If so, how did you respond? How did it make you feel?
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REDI (and earlier name for DEI at DoDEA) [prompts for class discussions](#) adapted from Raceforward.org. From presentation “*Be Well, Do Well.*”

ENGAGING IN EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CONVERSATIONS

7. Discuss inequitable structures and systems like privilege and racism.
8. Encourage empathy.
9. Inspire Hope and Activism
10. Understand this is an on-going learning process for you and your students.



A slide from presentation “We All Have Shoes: But Do they Fit? Health Education Equity” outlining how conversations around “privilege” are meant to lead to activism.

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IN 2020...

The President's Budget To Congress FY2021 included a first-ever chapter, "Stopping Wasteful and Unnecessary Spending," which was inspired by our oversight report, *Where's The Pork? A Study of \$600 Billion In Federal Grants*. Included in the President's Budget was our report, *Use-It-Or-Lose-It - How The Federal Government Spent \$97 Billion In September 2018*.

IN 2019...

Our Top 82 U.S. Non-Profit Hospitals: Quantifying Government Payments & Financial Assets report launched on FOX News' *Tucker Carlson Tonight* and USA TODAY. This report backstopped President Trump's two executive orders on healthcare price transparency by showing that wealthy charitable non-profit healthcare providers and their CEO's were making big profits. Colorado Governor Jared Polis (D) also cited this data in his state of the state address while arguing for price reforms.

IN 2018...

Open The Books' Mapping The Swamp, A Study Of The Administrative State Media report launched on FOX News' *The Ingraham Angle* and directly led to Representative Judy Hice's (R-GA) legislation on pension and bonus transparency (H.R. 2612). Furthermore, we briefed the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management & Budget regarding our policy ideas to drain the swamp.

IN 2017...

The Tax Cuts And Jobs Act 2017, passed into law and included a claw-back tax on Ivy League-style, excessive university endowments. The *Boston Globe* cited our Ivy League, Inc. oversight report as a catalyst for the legislative provision. Coverage included *The Wall Street Journal* and eight segments on Fox News.

IN 2016...

We exposed the \$20 million luxury-art procurement program at the Department of Veterans Affairs, which forced a public apology from the V.A. Secretary and the adoption of new rules to stop the abuse. Coverage included *Good Morning America* and *ABC World News Tonight*.

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