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July 23, 2021

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

A recent press report discovered that the Department of Education cited in its school reopening guidance a radical group that promotes a version of social and emotional learning that divides students by race. The group in question, the Abolitionist Teaching Network, was cofounded by Professor Bettina Love. Professor Love wrote in Ed Week, “It [Anti-racism work] needs to make structural changes that dismantle centuries-old, racist institutions from the ground up in order to rebuild with a commitment to community, safety (without police), justice, diversity, and actual equity.”<sup>1</sup> In the same Ed Week article, Professor Love writes, “We [her network] are watching reform that will not address racism, as school districts widely are implementing anti-racist curriculum with no structural changes to how racism functions in their districts.” The Abolitionist Teaching Network’s Guide for Racial Justice and Abolitionist Emotional and Social Learning demands “antiracist therapy for White educators and support staff.”<sup>2</sup>

Combating racism in our schools and society is important, but dividing our students based on their race is not a responsible solution.

I was pleased to see the Department quickly responded to the pushback on this resource by noting that it was an “error.”<sup>3</sup> I am concerned this was only deemed an error because a media company brought it to the public’s attention. The Department has established a pattern of supporting critical race theory-related information and material that divides our students and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-empty-promises-of-equity/2021/01>

<sup>2</sup> <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/8d4b8aa7-b12e-4df8-9836-081a29841523/downloads/ATN%20Guide%20to%20Racial%20and%20Restorative%20Justice%20in.pdf?ver=1626894788557>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-admin-walks-back-critical-race-theory>

communities based on race. When you appeared before our Committee last month, you noted you do not support the federal government weighing in on curriculum. I welcomed that statement, but you also notably failed to denounce critical race theory or the harm it does to the effort to end racial injustice.

Mr. Secretary, it is imperative that you take this opportunity to correct the early errors in the Department's support of this divisive agenda. I ask you to personally review all of the citations made in the COVID handbooks and ensure the message from you to your staff is clear: critical race theory and related policies and materials should not be referenced, referred, or recommended to any students, teachers, or educational agencies. I ask that this be done within two weeks of receipt of this letter. Please notify me upon completion of this directive and include in that notification the guidance you shared with your staff at the Department. Please also provide, within two weeks of receipt of this letter, all communications between Department staff and the Abolitionist Teaching Network or Professor Bettina Love or anyone who might have been associated with her. Lastly, I call upon you to issue a press release committing to the American people that nothing in the Department of Education's programs endorse, support, or otherwise encourage school districts to align with the Abolitionist Teaching Network or its self-described "coconspirators."

Please contact Mandy Schaumburg ([mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov](mailto:mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov) or (202) 225-6558) of the Committee staff should you have any questions about the request. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor