

Stoddard School District
Position Statement on The Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination (NH, HB2, RSA 193:40)

The Stoddard School District is committed to upholding our commitment to preparing students for their future. We recognize that one of the primary roles of public education is to prepare citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to be productive citizens. John Dewey, often referred to as the father of modern education, believed that public education for all was a crucial tool in preserving the republic and achieving the goals of democracy. In his work, [Democracy and Education](#), he espoused that the goal of education was to prepare students for an uncertain future by preparing them to think critically, and be able to learn on their own. These beliefs can be seen reflected in our Portrait of a Learner where we committed to providing an environment where learners will be prepared for their future by being respectful collaborators, knowledgeable problem solvers, creators, and effective communicators. On the 100th anniversary of Dewey's work, Tristan Stobie, reflected on Dewey's text in the modern world and summarizes Dewey's belief that "if democracy is to work it [requires] informed, knowledgeable and wise citizens and, therefore, education has a moral purpose. Classroom teachers and schools have a responsibility to nurture character as well as teach knowledge and skills." In Dewey's words from 100 years ago, *"no thought, no idea, can possibly be conveyed as an idea from one person to another.....only by wrestling with the conditions of the problem first hand, seeking and finding his[her] own way out, does he [she] think.the joy which children themselves experience is the joy of intellectual constructiveness."* [Dewey 1916, p166]

Recently, the conceptual framework referred to as Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been in the public discourse in many contexts and often alongside discussions of social and racial justice in the United States. Critical Race Theory was born out of a legal argument made in courtrooms and discussed in law classes starting in the 1970s. It is not an educational theory or curriculum. CRT is not taught in our school. At no time will any member of the Stoddard School District teach that one group is inherently superior, racist, sexist, or biased to another.

The guidance issued by the NH Department of Education, the NH Department of Justice, and the Commission for Human Rights reflects and affirms the approach the Stoddard School District will take when teaching the history of our country, the goals and beliefs of the republic, and the tenets of democracy. With any new legislation, and specifically the Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination, every member of the Stoddard School District will be informed and trained relative to the new law. No part of our curriculum teaches that one group is inherently superior, racist, sexist, or biased towards another. Teaching students how to engage in civil discourse about difficult ideas, differing viewpoints, and events in our past that can make us uncomfortable is a part of our curriculum and will continue to be. There is no prohibition against teaching about slavery, racism, social justice, or current events in the new law.

The Prohibition Against Teaching Discrimination applies to all courses, clubs, extra curricular activities, and employment trainings. Although this law does impact teacher free speech in the context of our classrooms and school activities, it does not impact the free speech of students. The free speech standard for students remains the same and is affirmed in case law from the US Supreme Court, often referred to as the "disruption standard" when determining if free speech needs to be curtailed.

Resources:

[Reflections on John Dewey's 'Democracy and Education'](#)

[298 New Section; Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: New discriminatory practice prohibitions applicable to k-12 educational programs](#)

[What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?](#)