



Commonwealth of Virginia  
Office of the Governor

## Executive Order

### NUMBER ONE (2022)

### ENDING THE USE OF INHERENTLY DIVISIVE CONCEPTS, INCLUDING CRITICAL RACE THEORY, AND RESTORING EXCELLENCE IN K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, I hereby issue this Executive Order to ensure excellence in K-12 public education in the Commonwealth by taking the first step on Day One to end the use of inherently divisive concepts, including Critical Race Theory, and to raise academic standards.

#### Importance of the Initiative

The future of the Commonwealth of Virginia is chiefly dependent on the education of our children. Education has life-shaping power, and our educational system should instill in Virginia students a love for lifelong learning to ensure that they become their own best teachers. We must enable our students to take risks, to think differently, to imagine, and to see conversations regarding art, science, and history as a place where they have a voice.

Political indoctrination has no place in our classrooms. The vast majority of learning in our schools involves imparting critical knowledge and skills in math, science, history, reading and other areas that should be non-controversial. Inherently divisive concepts, like Critical Race Theory and its progeny, instruct students to only view life through the lens of race and presumes that some students are consciously or unconsciously racist, sexist, or oppressive, and that other students are victims. This denies our students the opportunity to gain important facts, core knowledge, formulate their own opinions, and to think for themselves. Our children deserve far better from their education than to be told *what to think*.

Instead, the foundation of our educational system should be built on teaching our students *how to think* for themselves. Virginia must renew its commitment to teaching our children the value of freedom of thought and diversity of ideas. We must equip our teachers to teach our students the entirety of our history – both good and bad. From the horrors of

American slavery and segregation, and our country's treatment of Native Americans, to the triumph of America's Greatest Generation against the Nazi Empire, the heroic efforts of Americans in the Civil Rights Movement, and our country's defeat of the Soviet Union and the ills of Communism, we must provide our students with the facts and context necessary to understand these important events. Only then will we realize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream that our children "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

The Constitution of Virginia requires that the Governor shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed. It further provides a right to be free from any governmental discrimination upon the basis of religious conviction, race, color, sex, or national origin. Critical race theory and related concepts are teaching our children to engage in the very behavior the Constitution prohibits.

### **Directive**

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth, and pursuant to Article V of the Constitution and the laws of Virginia, I hereby order the following:

1. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review all policies within the Department of Education to identify those that promote inherently divisive concepts. Such policies shall be ended.
2. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall immediately review all guidelines, websites, best practices, and other materials produced by the Department of Education to identify those that promote or endorse divisive or inherently racist concepts. Such shall be removed.
3. Executive Employees shall be prohibited from directing or otherwise compelling students to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere to inherently divisive concepts.
4. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review the Department of Education's Cultural Competency Training to determine if it or any portion promotes inherently divisive concepts, and take action consistent with the laws of Virginia to modify such training to end the use of inherently divisive concepts. In addition, the Superintendent shall make recommendations on how the Department of Education and school division can develop and make available to all teachers and school leaders model professional development and training so teachers and schools are prepared to engage students on important civics and historical issues in a fair and unbiased manner without imposing their own personal beliefs.
5. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review and revise or rescind Superintendent's Memo #050-19 to remove reference to any inherently divisive concepts.
6. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review all changes made to the Commonwealth of Virginia's public education curriculum within the last 48 months to identify inherently divisive concepts, including concepts or ideas related to Critical Race Theory, and initiate, through the regular curriculum re-evaluation process,

changes that will replace them with concepts and lessons that ensure all Virginia students are taught to respect all individuals regardless of their race, sex, or faith.

7. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review the “EdEquityVA” program and end any portion that promotes inherently divisive concepts.
8. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall end the Virginia Math Pathways Initiative.
9. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report to me and the Secretary of Education within 30 days any policies, programs, training, or curricula that falls within the definition of inherently divisive concepts and within 90 days identify any necessary executive and legislative actions needed to end use of all inherently divisive concepts in public education.
10. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review and immediately end the use of any portion of any Governor’s School program that promotes inherently divisive concepts.
11. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall raise standards in K-12 education and immediately take steps to:
  - a. increase the transparency and honesty of performance measures for public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth and ensure that such measures do not obscure or conceal disparities in performance among student groups;
  - b. ensure that performance measures for public elementary and secondary schools prioritize the attainment of grade-level proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students, especially in grades K-5;
  - c. ensure that the Commonwealth’s proficiency standards on Standards of Learning assessments in reading and mathematics are rigorous in comparison with assessments administered by other states and national assessments in reading; and
  - d. increase the number of academic-year Governor's Schools in the Commonwealth and maintain standards of excellence for students in all such schools.
  - e. ensure that parents are empowered with open access to information on primary instructional materials utilized in any school and that fair and open policies are in place to address any concerns or complaints in a timely and respectful manner.
12. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall issue a report to the Secretary of Education and me within 90 days on the status of efforts to close the “achievement gap” in K-12 education, with recommendations for additional executive and

legislative actions that should be undertaken to ensure all students are graduating high school career and college ready.

13. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will initiate, through the regular curriculum re-evaluation process, changes that ensure Virginia students are given thorough and comprehensive education of world, United States, and Virginia history without the influence of inherently divisive concepts.

For the purposes of this Executive order “inherently divisive concepts” means advancing any ideas in violation of Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including, but not limited to of the following concepts (i) one race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith is inherently superior to another race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith; (ii) an individual, by virtue of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex or faith, is racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously, (iii) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex or faith, (iv) members of one race, ethnicity, sex or faith cannot and should not attempt to treat others as individuals without respect to race, sex or faith, (v) an individual's moral character is inherently determined by his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith, (vi) an individual, by virtue of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, ethnicity, sex or faith, (vii) meritocracy or traits, such as a hard work ethic, are racist or sexist or were created by a particular race to oppress another race.

### **Effective Date**

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order or directive.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 15th day of January, 2022.



Glenn Youngkin, Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Thomasson".

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth