



CRA Budget in Focus: Department of Education

CRA proposes a funding level of \$54.1 billion for the Department of Education in FY24—a decrease of \$25.1 billion or 31.7 percent from FY23 enacted levels. This decrease would amount to 17% of the \$147 billion in savings needed to return nondefense discretionary spending to the FY19 level. The Department (ED) is a key funder of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and radical gender theory in the nation's schools. The worldview is ideologically infused throughout the department's bureaucracy and distributed in their various competitive grant programs, often under the guise of "Culturally Responsive Learning" and "Social Emotional Learning" (SEL). The Department of Education has positioned itself as an adversary of the many parents and citizens raising concerns about the inherent race essentialism of CRT and its inappropriateness for schools across the country.

Key Definitions

Culturally Responsive Learning is a method of teaching that argues for the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning because it believes current instruction is built around European cultural values. Teaching this way prioritizes changing the standards that a student is judged by based on their culture and various "identities"—including ethnic, racial, religious, sexual, and gender. This often leads to wedges being driven between students based on various identities, attacking the very idea of teaching children to unite within a shared American culture and identity from which common ground and unity can grow.

As one example, NYU's Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, in guidance for re-opening schools after the pandemic, calls for reimagining schools and learning environments that are "erotic" where "learning itself, is pleasure." It calls into question homework ("making homework a thing of the past"), grading, "back to school nights," and disciplinary suspensions. It re-focuses class time on the "current geo-sociopolitical climate," encourages affinity groups based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, which will create racial divisions, and envisions students being surveyed during the summer to determine what they want to learn when they return. Finally, the guidance "eliminate[s] failure as an option," which is a way of saying that every student gets passed to the next grade no matter how poorly they do in the classroom.

Social Emotional Learning is the most prevalent delivery mechanism for infusing Critical Race Theory—and other radical ideologies—into the classroom. While done through seemingly innocuous terminology, one of the primary purposes of SEL is to push students into developing identities by focusing on "self-awareness" and "self-management." In recent years, the primary purveyors of SEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has turned to so-called "transformative" SEL, which pushes students and children to focus on systems of injustice and actions to realize liberation—all flowing seamlessly from the ideology of critical theory. SEL then necessarily adopts the concepts of antiracism, and many other woke terms, like DEI, to achieve healthy emotional development in children.

A Bureaucracy Weaponized Against Parents to Divide Students

- 1. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona collaborated with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the Department of Justice to open investigations into concerned parents at school board meetings as potential domestic terrorists.** On October 5, 2021, an e-mail from NSBA Treasurer Kristi Swett revealed that the interim head of the NSBA had agreed to send a formal letter to the White House targeting parents outraged about lockdowns, mask mandates, CRT, and radical gender theory as security threats *at the specific request of Secretary Cardona*.¹
- 2. ED is spending tens of millions of taxpayer dollars on regional “Equity Assistance Centers” to indoctrinate teachers into pushing Critical Race Theory and gender transition on children without parental knowledge.** ED has provided more than \$60 million through the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program for an intentional effort to morph teachers into progressive activists.²
- 3. ED issued a rule on April 19, 2021 outlining criteria for “culturally responsive learning” in K-12 History and Civics Education competitive grant programs.** The rule includes specific background information for the grant process stating that America is systemically racist and emphasizing both Ibram X. Kendi’s *“How to Be an Anti-Racist”* as well as the factually-challenged *1619 Project* propaganda campaign pushed by the *New York Times*.³
- 4. ED’s Office of Civil Rights proposed a rule in July 2022 that would gut Title IX by removing protections for women and girls in the name of radical gender theory.** The rule adds sexual orientation and gender identity—a core facet of radical gender theory—as protected classes within Title IX, thereby ensuring that biological men can compete in women’s sports, share women’s facilities, and apply for financial support once reserved for women.⁴
- 5. ED released an inaugural “Equity Action Plan” in 2022 as part of President Biden’s January 2021 executive order to have federal agencies focus on addressing “systemic racism.”** The plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for centering equity in funding, third-party contracts, and regulations. This rule not only guarantees that only secular, woke nonprofits and other entities will be the beneficiaries of taxpayer-funding, but serves as a force multiplier to transform the broader educational apparatus through woke dogma aimed at destroying the American way of life.⁵

¹Hasson, P. (January 11, 2022). “Education Secretary Cardona Solicited NSBA Letter Comparing Protesting Parents to Domestic Terrorists: E-mail,” *FOX News*.
<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/education-secretary-cardona-solicited-nsba-letter-comparing-parents-domestic-terrorists-email>

² Department of Education Press Office (September 27, 2022). “U.S. Department of Education Awards Over \$60 Million to Strengthen the Teacher Pipeline,” *U.S. Department of Education*.
<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-awards-over-60-million-strengthen-teacher-pipeline-increase-educator-leadership-and-support-quality-teaching-and-learning-further-address-teacher-shortage>

³ Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education (April 19, 2021). “*Proposed Priorities—American History and Civics Education*,” *Federal Register*.
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-19/pdf/2021-08068.pdf>

⁴ Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education (July 2022). “Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Amend Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,” *U.S. Department of Education*.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/t9nprm.pdf>

⁵ Department of Education, Office of the Secretary (2022). “2022 Agency Equity Plan Related to Executive Order 13985,” *U.S. Department of Education*.
<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/equity/2022-equity-plan.pdf>

6. **The Department of Education is dispersing billions in taxpayer-funding in the form of grants, contracts, federal student aid, and emergency COVID aid to institutions actively engaged in the suppression of free speech.** Reps. James Comer (R-KY) and Virginia Foxx (R-NC) sent an Oversight letter to Secretary Cardona in September 2022 outlining ED's continued funding of such colleges and universities - Yale University (\$620 million), Harvard University (\$1.1 billion), University of Pennsylvania (\$830 million), Georgetown University (\$370 million), University of Southern California (\$1.1 billion), University of Washington (\$1.2 billion), University of Michigan (\$1.1 billion), University of California Hastings College of the Law (\$30 million), and Arizona State University (\$1 billion) - that do not protect academic freedom and free speech on their campuses.⁶

Examples of Woke Grant Funding

- A \$2.2 million grant through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to the **Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania** for “increasing educational equity through culturally responsive schooling.”
- A \$361,000 grant through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to **Arizona State University** for the “professional development” of those involved in culturally responsive technician education.
- A \$597,000 grant through the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) to the **University of Illinois at Chicago** for Asian American and Pacific Islander citizens who are “culturally responsive, engaged, dynamic, informed, and thoughtful.” Otherwise known as the CREDIT program, reserved for explicit minorities who are deemed sufficiently woke.
- A series of five grants totaling \$7.7 million through the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) to **Angelo State University in Texas** for “culturally responsive education” in mechanical engineering, infusing race essentialism and critical race theory into the hard sciences.
- A \$3.4 million School Safety National Activities Grant, to the **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** for the promotion of social emotional learning (SEL). SEL is a core derivative of critical race theory utilized as a key mechanism for distributing the ideology throughout school systems.
- A \$2.1 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **University of Iowa** for “culturally responsive talent identification and career exploration” to increase the participation of “underrepresented” students in talented and gifted programs.
- A \$1.2 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **City Garden Montessori School in St. Louis** for “anti-racism training” for children as young as 3 years-old.
- A series of three grants totaling \$1.8 million through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **Delsea Regional High School District in New Jersey** for “a focus on culturally responsive climate, equity, and discipline” with the specific intent of turning students into activists within their school.
- A \$683,000 grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **Board of Regents at the University of Nebraska** for “nurturing educators who integrate culturally responsive teaching” to push students into progressive activism by supporting “... students in becoming makers of change.”

⁶ Sibarium, A. (September 28, 2022). “House Republicans Launch Probe Into Education Department’s Funding of Woke Universities,” *The Washington Free Beacon*.
<https://freebeacon.com/campus/house-republicans-launch-probe-into-education-departments-funding-of-woke-universities/>

- A \$6.7 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **Sealaska Heritage Institute** for the “Raven Writes program” to promote “culturally responsive learning” in the Juneau elementary school system.
- A \$28,000 grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **Walatowa Charter High School in New Mexico** for “culturally and linguistically responsive” teaching and learning projects.
- A \$2.9 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **University of Hawaii** for “culturally responsive leadership development, mentoring, and transition support” aimed at taking advantage of at-risk youth through the promotion of woke dogma.
- A \$8.9 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz** for “advancing social emotional learning” in a holistic manner for educators, redefining the role of teachers from educator to progressive activist.
- A \$8.1 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to the **Alder Graduate School of Education in California** for “developing effective teachers to create culturally responsive learning environments” in teacher residency programs within cities.
- A \$5.6 million grant through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to **WestEd in California** for “The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety.”
- A \$1.2 million grant through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) to **California State University, Long Beach Research Foundation** for “culturally responsive transition support” in school counseling and special education, training administrators and teachers into pushing race essentialism in counseling and services for children with special needs.
- A \$2.7 million grant through the SEED program to the **Center for Leadership and Educational Equity in Rhode Island** to train teachers and administrators to “address the root causes of educational inequities” and transform systems by dismantling systemic racism.
- A \$1.5 million grant through the SEED program to the **University of Texas in Arlington** to instruct teachers on how to blend math with social-emotional learning (SEL) and other Critical Theory concepts.
- A \$1.9 million grant through the SEED program to **National Center for Teacher Residencies in Chicago** to train teachers to “center equity” and be “culturally responsive” in the classroom in order to “address the enduring and systemic inequities in school systems.”
- Two grants totaling \$570,000 to pay the salaries of **Broward County and Alachua County school board members in Florida** who pushed mask mandates and lockdowns on children—inflicting years of both learning and developmental loss on the most vulnerable students.⁷
- A \$3 million grant to **University of Arkansas** and \$2.9 million to **University of Massachusetts** through the English Language Acquisition program to ensure “learner equity via advocacy” and “centering relationships, equity, and access” for teachers.

⁷ News Service of Florida (September 28, 2021). “Feds to Cover Broward County School Board Salaries,” *The Miami Times*.

https://www.miamitimesonline.com/news/local/feds-to-cover-broward-county-school-board-salaries/article_c5f32f0c-209d-11ec-a2db-7fdea1031ec1.html

Major Discretionary Savings:
In millions of dollars

Program	FY23	CRA FY24	Difference (\$)	Difference (%)
School Improvement Programs*	5,810,000	392,374	-5,417,626	-93.2
Education for the Disadvantaged*	19,088,000	16,213,665	-2,874,335	-15.1
Safe Schools & Citizen Education*	457,000	0	-457,000	-100.0
Innovation & Improvement*	1,453,000	0	-1,453,000	-100.0
Higher Education Programs	3,526,000	420,000	-3,106,000	-88.1
Supp. Ed. Opportunity Grants	2,140,000	0	-2,140,000	-100.0
Limiting Pell Eligibility to Need	22,115,000	16,900,000	-5,215,000	-23.6
Institute for Education Services	808,000	0	-808,000	-100.0
Other Programs	23,835,000	20,217,092	-3,617,907	-11.9
Total, Department of Education	79,232,000	54,143,131	-25,088,869	-31.7

*These spending levels assume the creation of a single block grant of \$16.2 billion to consolidate and replace numerous elementary and secondary education programs and teacher improvement programs.