

Iowa schools' racism response tainted by political activism

Yet another Iowa public school district has been discovered advocating a bevy of controversial and political causes through anti-racism materials presented to parents, teachers, and students – including defunding the police, “affirming” LGBTQ lifestyles, decriminalizing marijuana, contributing to bail funds for violent protesters, asking lawmakers to denounce Donald Trump, and more.

In January, The FAMiLY Leader revealed the “Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action” at the Ames Community School District in Ames, Iowa, included a year-long effort to become “trans affirming,” “queer affirming,” and “committed to disrupting the Western prescribed nuclear family structure.” Suggested materials further included teaching kindergarteners they have a “right to choose their own gender” and middle-schoolers that capitalism is “the worship of death.”

Now, just weeks after a student's racist social media post sparked protests on campus in Cedar Falls, the Cedar Falls Community School District has launched a website of “Equity Resources” to help students, staff, and parents “[undo] some of the harm that has done by hate in our community.” But similar to Ames, some of the resources go far beyond addressing racism.

Cedar Falls' Equity Resources include, for example, a “Resist Bot Support Kit for Black Lives Matter” that suggests parents and students contribute to a bail fund for protesters and contact Congress to “loudly denounce” Donald Trump. The link “Ways You Can Help” directs to a website that includes petitions to defund the police. And the “Beyond the Hashtag: How to Take Anti-Racist Action in Your Life” encourages asking legislators to decriminalize marijuana and end voter ID laws,

advocates reparation payments, suggests reading the Marxist book "A People's History of the United States" by Howard Zinn, and more.

"This website is by no means an all-encompassing resource list," the Cedar Falls Equity Resources page explains. "We will continually be adding new resources, including additional LGBTQ+ and inclusion links, plus more."

Some, however, say that schools should beware lumping LGBTQ activism, Marxism, and politically-motivated causes into discussions on racism.

In Ames, Lead Pastor Mark Vance of Cornerstone Church of Ames told KCCI-TV he supports meaningful dialogue on race and justice but is concerned that the additional, political content may be detracting from that dialogue.

"What is being presented as a curriculum goes far beyond a discussion about Black history," he said.

"The additional elements shoehorned into this curriculum reveal an agenda that extends way beyond justice and racial reconciliation," warns Bob Vander Plaats, president and CEO of The FAMiLY Leader. "This is just one of many examples of why parents need to be aware and involved and need to have the opportunity to make educational choices that are in the best interests of their children."