

COMMONWEALTH ★ ★ ★ POLICY CENTER ★ ★ ★

Ideology Is Replacing Education in Jefferson County Public Schools

What is JCPS teaching our students?

- The Diversity, Equity, and Poverty (DEP) Department is promoting racism and LGBTQ identity to students.
- The DEP Department’s Multicultural Book List seeks to “**address institutional and interpersonal racism.**” It also includes pro-LGBTQ+ books such as *Born Ready*: “Penelope is sure of two things: He’s a ninja, and he’s a boy. The rest of the world—including his parents, two brothers, and sister—all see him as a girl. But **he knows deep inside that he is a boy...**”¹
- W.E.B. DuBois Academy is a school dedicated to “Afro–Centric curriculum.”² But focusing curriculum based on race is contrary to America’s founding ideas and implicitly racist. Why should we not want an American-centric curriculum?
- Equity Lens: DEP focuses its energy on “prejudice elimination,” and “equitable pedagogy.”³

What does “racial equity” mean?

“Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge, embrace and adjust for imbalances.”

Does JCPS have the right priorities?

- The three pillars of JCPS are: (1) the backpack of success skills, (2) racial equity, and (3) culture and climate.⁴
- Critics are asking why JCPS doesn’t prioritize reading, writing, math, and civics? Over 75% of JCPS students are less than proficient in reading and math,⁵ and the district is suffering from a shortage of certified teachers.
- JCPS’ test scores:
 - Proficient Reading: Elementary 24%, Middle 21%, High 23%
 - Proficient Math: Elementary 22%, Middle 18%, High 17%

Is JCPS defying Kentucky law?

- The DEP Department’s *Envision Equity* magazine condemned SB 150 (2023), which banned the teaching of gender ideology in public schools, and SB 5 (2023), which gave parents recourse to objectionable books in public schools. The magazine argued that “they disproportionately target LGBTQ+ individuals.”⁶ While the district cannot legally force staff to adopt students’ preferred pronouns, it continues to “strongly encourage” their use.
- The magazine also proposes creative ways for JCPS staff to follow the letter of the laws while still promoting LGBT ideology, undermining legislative intent.

Where is the money going?

JCPS’ total budget is **almost \$2 billion**. Of that, **\$30.02 million** is designated for the DEP Department.⁷ The average annual salary for DEP employees is **over \$100,000**.⁸ Another **\$38.57 million** goes to “Racial Equity Funds”⁹ including **\$36.11 million** for salaries. **\$1.4 million** is allocated for school racial equity funds.

¹[Multicultural Book List](#)

²[W.E.B. DuBois Academy](#)

³[ARE Tool & the PLC Framework Alignment](#)

⁴[Pillars of JCPS](#)

⁵<https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us>

⁶[Stephen Beck, “Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Learning Spaces in our Current Environment.”](#)

⁷[JCPS Open Finance](#)

⁸DEP Staff with Salaries 12.10.2024 AH

⁹[JCPS Racial Equity Funding Dashboard](#)