



BCHighMUN 30



Birmingham School Board: Critical Race Theory

Chair: Johnny Sullivan

Co-Chair: Alex Jordan

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Letter From The Chair

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Johnny Sullivan and I am delighted to welcome you to the Birmingham School Board Meeting on Critical Race Theory at BCHighMUN 30.

I am a junior at Boston College High School. This is my third year in the Model United Nations, and I have been elected to the role of Ministre des Delegates. In addition to BCHigh MUN, I participate in the Catholic Gay Straight Organization, Diversity Cabinet, Students Organized Against Racism, Youth and Government, theatre, The Better Men Project, BC High Ski Team, and BC High Sailing Team. These clubs and sports have helped me foster a love for public speaking and compromise.

I can not wait to hear about the creative solutions you all will make to address this pressing and polarizing issue. Please email me your position papers (if you would like to be considered for a best position paper award) and any questions you may have regarding your position research @j.sullivan23@students.bchigh.edu

Have a happy and healthy year. See you in March!

Best of luck,

Johnny Sullivan '23



Letter From The Co-Chair

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Alex Jordan and I will be your co-chair and I am a junior here at BC High.

While at BC High I have had the opportunity to participate on the track and field team, Black Latino Student Union, Diversity Cabinet, Art Council, and BC High Theatre.

I am very excited for the opportunity to hear your fruitful conversations on this paramount issue. Feel free to contact me via email with any questions or concerns

[@aj.jordan23@students.bchigh.edu](mailto:aj.jordan23@students.bchigh.edu)

Sincerely,

Alex Jordan '23



Introduction

This committee is formed to act as the school board of Birmingham, Alabama. As a special committee we will operate somewhat differently than committees you are probably accustomed to Model UN. Our committee will follow the basics of parliamentary procedure, but there are a few differences. This committee is a school board meeting so it is up to the 9 school board members to vote on any acts that directly impact Birmingham Public Schools. You may notice other positions in this committee. They are members of the community, students, or faculty who will be in the “audience” of this committee. They will speak to the board and present issues regarding the topic. The “audience” will also get to vote, but it is ultimately up to those 9 members to interpret the audience's views and do what is best for the community. This committee will adapt to any changes regarding the topic in Birmingham, AL that may occur leading up to the conference. The issue and tensions of introducing critical race theory in public schools are relatively new, but the issue of inequitable curriculum regarding race relations and African-American history is one that stems back to the enslavement of black people in the United States.



Historical Background

Defined by the NAACP Critical Race Theory is, “an academic and legal framework that denotes that systemic racism is part of American society — from education and housing to employment and healthcare.” The intellectual ideas of critical race theory date back to the 1960s, but it was not officially organized with a workshop on critical race theory (CRT) until 1989. CRT was born from former ideas like critical legal studies (CLS) and Marxist-oriented critical theory. CRT along with CLS are based on the goal of creating equitable treatment under the law for all races. Founders of CRT and legal scholars, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic believe there are set basic tenets of the theory. The document below states the 5 tenets.

CRT Tenet	Definition	Source
Permanence of racism	Racism, both conscious and unconscious is a permanent component of American life	Bell (1992); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Ladson-Billings (1998)
Whiteness as property	Because of the history of race and racism in the United States and the role U.S. jurisprudence has played in reifying conceptions of race, the notion of Whiteness can be considered a property interest	Harris (1995); Ladson-Billings (1998); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)
Counter storytelling and majoritarian narratives	A method of telling a story that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths especially ones held by the majority; majoritarian narratives are also recognized as stories and not assumed to be facts or the truth	Matsuda (1995); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Delgado (1995); Ladson-Billings (1998); Solórzano and Yosso (2001)
Interest convergence	Significant progress for Blacks is achieved only when the goals of Blacks are consistent with the needs of Whites	Bell (1980a, 2004); Ladson-Billings (1998)
Critique of liberalism	Critique of basic notions embraced by liberal ideology to include color blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality of the law	Crenshaw (1988); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Ladson-Billings (1998)
Intersectionality	Considers race across races and the intersection of race with other identities and differences	Crenshaw (1991)

Note. Adapted from Horsford (2010b).



In addition to the five tenets CRT upholds the “social construction thesis” which states race is a social construct. CRT being based in critical law studies (CLS), so legal examples to support the theory would be the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case where all black people in the U.S. were declared not citizens of the U.S., the one drop rule where one drop of “black blood” made someone black during the Jim Crow era, the 1935 decision to deny minorities social security and exclude them from unions, the 1945 U.S housing programs that only benefited white people and stopped people of color (POC) from buying homes, and the Bracero Program which brought Mexican labors for work into the U.S. to support WWII, but were deported back to Mexico once the war was over. These are just a few examples of legal doings critical race theory studies and analyses.

Critical Race Theory faces skepticism from across the political spectrum. Legal scholar critics, “faulted CRT for its apparent embrace of an incoherent, postmodernist-inspired skepticism of objectivity and truth, as evidenced in applications of the “voice of colour” thesis and other discussions in the CRT literature”(Britannica). Critical race theory receives support from across the political spectrum. The attention on CRT’s support grew when an unarmed black teenager, Trevon Martin, was shot and killed by a white “community watch” man, George Zimmerman. This incident and countless others drew nationwide protests about police brutality against black people in the U.S. CRT has influenced fields outside legal studies, like gender studies, education, American studies, and sociology. Many other



movements have stemmed from CRT too. Historically CRT curriculum has remained in college level courses.



Current Issue

As of August 12, 2021 the Alabama Board of Education has banned Critical Race Theory (CRT) from being taught. The Resolution titled, "The preservation of intellectual freedom and non-discrimination in Alabama's public schools" which bans, "concepts that impute fault, blame, a tendency to oppress others, or the need to feel guilt or anguish to persons solely because of their race or sex." This resolution restricts educators from teaching topics regarding systemic racism including CRT. Protests throughout Alabama including Birmingham have erupted in response to this resolution. The Birmingham school committee must decide if they will take action, and what kind of action is most appropriate.



Positions in the Committee

Leaders:

1. Mayor Randall Woodfin: mayor of Birmingham since 2017
2. Dr. Embekka Robinson : the new superintendent of Birmingham Public Schools

Board Members:

1. Sherman Collins Jr., District 1: District 1 includes the following schools: Huffman Academy Elementary, Sun Valley Elementary, Smith Middle School, and Huffman High.
2. Neonta Williams, District 2: District 2 includes the following schools: Martha Gaskins Elementary, Robinson Elementary, Christian k-8, Huffman Middle School, Ossie Ware Middle School, and Putnam Middle School.
3. Mary Boehm, District 3: District 3 includes the following schools: Avondale Elementary, EPIC Elementary, Glen Iris Elementary, and Ramsay High.
4. Derrick L. Billups, District 4: District 4 includes the following schools: Hayes Elementary, Hudson Elementary, Inglenook Elementary, Woodlawn High, and Dupuy Alternative School.
5. James A. Sullivan, District 5: District 5 includes the following schools: Barrett Elementary, Oliver Elementary, Phillips Academy, and Parker High.



6. Leticia Watkins, District 6: District 6 includes the following schools: Hemphill Elementary and Washington K-8.
7. Walter Wilson, District 7: District 7 includes the following schools: Oxmoor Valley Elementary, West End Academy, Arrington Middle School, Jones Valley Middle School, and Wenonah High.
8. Sonja Q. Smith, District 8: District 8 includes the following schools: Brown Elementary, Central Park Elementary, Minor Elementary, Princeton Elementary, Bush K-8, Bush Hills STEAM Academy, and Green Acres Middle School.
9. Jason Meadows, District 9: District 9 includes the following schools: Norwood Election, Tuggle Elementary, Wylam K-8, South Hampton K-8, Wilkerson Middle School, Carver High, and Jackson-Oliver High.

Parents:

1. Barbara Turner: She is the concerned mother of Jacob Turner and she is a part time firefighter for the city of Birmingham. She believes critical race theory should not be in public schools because she thinks it "causes more racism".
2. Susan Walker: Head of PTA. She believes CRT should be taught and schools, but does not trust all the teachers. Outside of the PTA she is a dentist and will constantly bring up her medical degree.
3. Martin Green
4. Mabel Adams



5. Trevor Young
6. Bo Brown
7. Mildred Woods
8. Roger Simmons
9. Asher Simmons
10. William Price

Faculty:

1. Pam Price
2. Ellis Hamilton
3. Rose Crawford
4. Karen Smith
5. Mason Smith

Students:

1. Carol Rice
2. Sadie Johnson
3. Sawyer Maxwell Robinson III
4. Cameron Kennedy



Questions to Consider

- I. Are people of color (POC) students negatively impacted by learning about the oppression towards POC and systemic racism?
- II. Are teachers qualified to teach topics about race regarding the oppression of POC and systemic racism? Is the solution more training?
- III. Should anti-racism be taught in Birmingham Public Schools rather than Critical Race Theory?



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