

# A Teachers' Guide to Recent Federal Action on Teaching about Race and Identity



*What to Know and Resources to Share*

## What is the “Ending Radical Indoctrination” Executive Order?

President Trump’s [“Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling” Executive Order \(EO\)](#) aims to eliminate federal funding used to teach students about “gender ideology” or “discriminatory equity ideology.” By broadly defining these terms, the EO targets accurate teaching of American history, including the history of race and racism, as well as accurate teaching about gender and sexual identity. The EO also promises the re-institution of the “President’s 1776 Commission” to promote “patriotic” education.

The order directs the Education, Defense, and Health and Human Services departments to develop a strategy for eliminating federal funding for schools that are “discriminatory” based on these definitions, identifying and eliminating funding streams used for “indoctrination.”

## What does this mean for schools?

This EO does not change what you already were and were not allowed to teach.

- **The federal government cannot dictate curriculum or restrict funding based on it.** Multiple laws restrict the federal government from interfering in curriculum decision-making:
  - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) prohibits federal officials from “mandating a school’s specific instructional content, academic standards ... curricula, or program of instruction.”
  - The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) prohibits federal “direction, supervision, or control” of “curriculum, program of instruction,” or “selection of library resources, textbooks, or other ... instructional materials.”
  - In order to pull funding, the Education Department’s civil rights office would have to investigate allegations, find a violation, and also find that the school is refusing to address the violation.
- **States and districts, though, can influence curriculum decision making, and in recent years, approximately 250 local, state, and federal government entities have introduced** bills, executive orders, and other policies that restrict the content of teaching and trainings related to race and identity in public schools.
  - [18 Republican-majority state legislatures](#) have passed laws restricting the teaching of “divisive concepts.”
  - Some of these “divisive” concepts include concepts related to structural disadvantage, systemic racism and sexism, and other theories that map out the influence that discriminatory laws and practices from the past have on current institutions, social systems, policy, and law.

While this EO doesn’t change what is permitted to be taught, it likely will embolden attacks against students of color and LGBTQ+ students and contribute to a school environment that is not welcoming or inclusive for them.

## What should I do in response to this?

- Keep teaching as you were before the EO! This EO is simply meant to intimidate.
- Follow state and local law and policy regarding teaching about race and identity. [This tool from CRT Forward](#) lets you search your state or district to learn about laws banning certain types of teaching.
- If you witness an incidence of bullying or discrimination, in addition to intervening, keep detailed notes documenting the time, place and circumstances of any incidents of harassment and discrimination.