



OKLAHOMA STATE  
DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

To: Members of the State Board of Education  
From: Superintendent Ryan Walters  
Date: April 27, 2023  
Re: DEI Spending in Oklahoma Public Schools

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As you know, I am greatly concerned that the concept of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI) is increasingly being used to instruct students in harmful ideologies under the guise of promoting tolerance. No one disagrees that we should include students with disabilities in education or that all students should have access to a quality education regardless of race, religion, or background. DEI hides among these universal principles to force radical ideologies on students, teaching them that they must either accept a radical rejection of American principles or accept being labeled as exclusionary or racist.

In particular, I am concerned about DEI instruction teaching our students that they must oppose long-held American traditions like equal rights, free speech, or meritocracy. Such DEI programs reject the equality of all people in favor of an equity defined solely to advance certain ideologies at the expense of a free society. I do not believe that Oklahomans want their tax dollars spent to radicalize their children in this subversive manner.

I recognize that DEI has become a fashionable term in certain circles and that not all programming labeled as such is necessarily pursuing these harmful ends. Thus, to start the conversation on how DEI is affecting our schools, I believe some transparency is needed on the expenditures that Oklahoma schools are making.

Thus, I am requesting that the Board require all Superintendents of school districts in Oklahoma to file a special report containing the following information:

1. A list of all DEI-related expenditures made in the school district during the 2022-2023 school year.
  - a. This list should separately indicate expenditures on (1) staff, (2) materials, and (3) third party contractors or vendors.
  - b. For each of those three subcategories, the list should further separately indicate the amount of state or local funds, the amount of federal funds, and the amount of private funds involved in the expenditure.
  - c. For the final report, the list should include an indication of whether each separate expenditure is expected to continue in the next fiscal year.
2. A list of all personnel spending at least 25% of their time operating or assisting with a DEI program in the school district during the 2022-2023 school year;
3. An electronic copy of all materials used by school staff or third-party contractors for DEI instruction in the school district during the 2022-2023 school year.

For purposes of this special report, DEI is defined as (1) instruction or programs teaching that meritocracy, equality of opportunity, or freedom of speech is harmful to society or subgroups within society and (2) anything that the school or district has labeled as involving or as related to DEI, whether for state or federal purposes.

I am requesting that preliminary responses be due to the Department no later than **June 9, 2023**, with final versions of the special report due to the Department no later than **September 1, 2023**. Any school district that indicates it has nothing responsive in the preliminary report should be relieved of any obligation to file the final report.