



## NYSRSAS UPDATE

*Eugene Goldwasser*



### COVID-19

In our last newsletter, we advocated for everyone eligible to get vaccinated as the key method to combat the COVID-19 virus. Clinical studies assessing the effectiveness of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have supported this idea, as states with a majority of vaccinated adults have lower rates of infections and deaths than states with a majority of unvaccinated residents. Now that the FDA and CDC have approved booster shots for seniors over 65 and for those who are immunocompromised, these outcomes should continue for those who choose to be vaccinated. We hope the majority of our members have availed themselves of the vaccines and have been able to continue to live their lives as normally as possible.

### Citizenship Award

Towards the end of the last school year, NYSRSAS initiated a **Citizenship Award** to be awarded to high school juniors who exemplified the traits of good citizenship as determined by their high school principals and guidance staff. Six high schools responded to our request for nominations and we granted six citizenship award certificates together with \$100 to each of six deserving students. We plan to continue the Citizenship Award this year and, starting in January, will designate high schools and request nominations from them.

The monetary award of \$100 per student came from donations from NYSRSAS Executive Board members. Altogether we raised \$1,150, \$600 of which was distributed in June and the rest to be distributed in March, 2022. If you think this award is something you would want to support, please donate to NYSRSAS and send your check to our treasurer, Ned Price, 31 Walters Avenue, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724.

### Controversial Issues and Differing Points-of-View

We recognize that not everyone agrees with everything printed in our newsletter. In fact, we encourage members with differing points-of-view to give voice to their opinions and perspectives by either responding to pieces written in the newsletter or by composing their own pieces and submitting them to our newsletter editor for inclusion in future publications.

Some pieces, by their nature, are controversial, such as Critical Race Theory, Gun Control, Academic Freedom and Climate Change to name a few. An organization profits from providing various points-of-view for its members to consider and react to. We strive for accuracy and hope that anyone who writes for this newsletter is interested in providing accurate information.

### Focus on Elections

A major focus for 2022 will be elections of federal and state officials such as the New York State Governor. Members of the House of Representatives and the New York State Assembly and Senate will be up for election as well. Our association will conduct research into the various races with an eye to providing endorsements in October, 2022.

### Upcoming Meetings

A sub-committee will be meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> on Zoom to develop a survey to determine our membership values as well as the areas our organization will focus on in the coming year. The survey will be mailed to you in January with your membership renewal. Our next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 A.M. on Zoom.

*NYSRSAS President, Gene Goldwasser, was a school principal for 24 years. Since retiring, he has been a Hofstra adjunct professor and a coach with the Institute for Student Achievement.*

**Editor's Note:** *Critical Race Theory (CRT) has become a very controversial topic. In the next pages, we present two articles on the subject which have very different points of view. We ask you to remember that articles published in the newsletter reflect the opinions of the writer and, unless otherwise indicated, do not represent the position of NYSRSAS as an organization. As always, we invite you to respond to any article in the newsletter in an email to the editor ([clipsethuberman@gmail.com](mailto:clipsethuberman@gmail.com)). If you would care to write an article that you think would be of interest to our readership, contact the editor as well.*

## **WHY IS CRITICAL RACE THEORY SO INFLAMMATORY? ITS STORMY RELATIONSHIP TO EDUCATION**

*Kenneth Forman*

In order to understand the issue of race and education, we need to gather a historical perspective of the terminology “critical race theory.” History documents issues of racism in education in our country but, fanning the fire, both sides have further engorged the issue of racism into US vs. THEM! This issue of “critical race theory” has become polarized, dividing the left and the right on opposing sides, with one side charging that the theory divides people into “oppressed” and “oppressor” groups and the other side urging tolerance. Whatever happened to education becoming the great equalizer, the melting pot of America? Let me be clear, I’m not a fan of using inflammatory rhetoric to describe a hot button issue facing education of our youngsters across our schools.

### **Historical perspective**

Let’s begin with the history of critical race theory according to my understanding of research. Critical race theory began as a law school seminar which encouraged its students to engage in debate about the treatment of minorities in America. Events of the last decade increased public awareness about things like housing segregation, the impacts of criminal justice policy in the 1990s, and the legacy of slavery, bringing this controversial topic into the spotlight.

### **The role of government**

The question has arisen—what is the government’s role in righting past wrongs.? Does the schoolhouse have a role in addressing these past issues? So the debate becomes especially volatile—especially in K-12, where numerous state legislatures are seeking to ban its discussion in classrooms.

### **Critical race theory in education**

There are significant disagreements even among experts about critical race theory as well as how its principles should inform K-12 policy and

practice. *Education Week* researched critical race theory and defined as its core idea that “race is a social construct, and that racism is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies.” *Education Week* concluded the basic tenets of critical race theory emerged out of a framework for legal analysis in the late 1970s and early 1980s created by legal scholars Derrick Bell, Kimberley Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. They proposed that a good example is when, in the 1930s, government officials literally drew lines around areas deemed poor financial risks, often explicitly due to the racial composition of inhabitants. Banks subsequently refused to offer mortgages to the predominantly Black people in those areas.

### **Where are we as a society**

Critical race theory postulates that racism is part of everyday life, so people—white or nonwhite—who don’t intend to be racist can nevertheless make choices that fuel racism. This is where I disagree with this theoretical underpinning. I believe that good people are inherently not racist! As an educational leader, I have fought this battle throughout my career.

However, opponents claim that critical race theory advocates discriminating against white people in order to achieve equity. Critical race theory puts an emphasis on outcomes, not merely on individuals’ own beliefs, and calls on these outcomes to be examined and rectified. Does this mean we have to change the construct of schooling to compensate for equity? I think NOT. There are many disagreements about how precisely to do those things. From my perspective, there is no mandate to bring critical race theory into curriculum content, but rather to reform teaching practices so that *(cont’d on page 5)*

## CRITICAL RACE THEORY [CRT]

*William Stern*

Surprisingly, Critical Race Theory (referred to as CRT for the remainder of this article) is not new. It is an academic discipline, concocted in the 1990s, based on the theoretical framework of “identity-based” Marxism. CRT has become no longer simply an academic subject, but a tool of political strength. It essentially rebukes Martin Luther King’s idea that Americans “not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

Supporters of the theory, knowing that “Identity-Based Marxism” or “neo-Marxism” would be a very difficult philosophy to “sell” in the United States, began using euphemisms such as “equity,” “social justice,” and “diversity and inclusion.” Equity sounds non-threatening and can easily be thought of, or confused with, equality. However, there is a huge difference between the two.

Equality is a principle declared in our Declaration of Independence, and is explicitly rejected by CRT. Equity, as professed by UCLA Law Professor Cheryl Harris, requires suspension of private property rights, seizing land and wealth, and redistributing them along racial lines. An equity-based form of government would mean the end of private property as we know it, the end of individual rights, the end of equality under the law, and the end of freedom of speech. These would be replaced by race-based redistribution of wealth, group-based rights, and omnipotent bureaucratic authority.

Far too many Americans have developed a fear of speaking out on social and political issues, especially those where race is involved. A recent Gallup poll found that 77% of conservatives were afraid to share their political beliefs.

The United States constitution gives us individual rights, not group rights, and give us all the same rights under the law. The differences in individuals give them the right to different pathways to success, as defined by free will. What some people don’t understand is that the constitution grants us equal opportunity, not equal outcome. This is the exact opposite of CRT’s guaranteed outcome. CRT’s philosophy is equalized outcome, regardless of who earned what.

CRT is, in itself, inherently racist. It places all life’s problems and complaints as one race against another.

er. It insists that people of different races, with equal education, employment, work ethic, and effort, cannot receive similar outcomes. Instead of believing in the possibility of an individual achieving, CRT states that it is impossible, and places the blame on race. To believe in CRT, one must believe that skin color is all-important in reaching success. Really? Ask Colin Powell, a Black graduate of the City College of New York, who went on to become a four-star general, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of State. He is but one example, but there are hundreds of thousands more.

To use a more personal example, one of the minority young ladies I trained in the weight room in Half Hollow Hills went on to be a track star at Brown University, and eventually a graduate of Harvard Law School. I use this one example to show that success is generally hinged on how hard one is willing to work to reach a goal, not on one’s race.

Glenn Loury, of Brown University, criticized the schools, and higher education institutes in particular, for buying into CRT, and letting it affect the teaching of the classics and other subjects, because of their supposed “whiteness.” A Columbia professor, John McWhorter, stated that “the new strain of ‘anti-racism’ forces people to embrace a new kind of racism as long as they don’t call it what it is.”

Should a Japanese child born today be responsible for what Tojo did? Should a German child born today be responsible for what Hitler did? No? So why should an American child born today be accused of racism because they are white, and because of acts of racism 50, 100, or 150 year ago?

Finally, CRT chooses to ignore legitimate data. More people, mostly minorities, have come to the United States, than to any other country. The U.S. is home to 19% of the world’s legal immigrants, and they comprise 13% of our population. From a wealth point of view, 25% of the millionaires in the U.S. are minorities - Black, Asian, and Hispanic - proving the American dream, upward mobility, and capitalism are alive and well, not that we are a racist country.

*Dr. William H. Stern is former Director of Health, PE and Intramural Sports in the Half Hollow Hills District. He also served as coach of high school and college athletic teams.*

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

**ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT . . . CUCUMBERS !!!!!**

*Corine Lipset-Huberman*

P#rt%y&\$DH !!!!! The world is a mess! COVID is killing more and more people daily! Southern school superintendents are screaming “Masks and vaccinations!” Some southern governors are shouting “Not on my watch!” There’s a mess in Afghanistan -- Taliban came in, Americans raced to get out! Pelosi and Schumer frantically try to get infrastructure bills passed, McCarthy and McConnell frantically try to prevent them. And the debt ceiling is a problem AGAIN! DACA is screaming “Let us stay!!!!” Migrants in Mexico are screaming “Let us in!!!!”

Yes, the world is a mess and I’m tired of it all. So today, my friends, I’m going to forego writing about all these problems. Instead, I’m going to write about cucumbers. “Cucumbers?” you say. “What is there to write about cucumbers?”

Well, keep reading, because I’m going to tell you things about cucumbers that you never knew. For example, did you know that cucumbers can even fix a hangover? Yes, that’s right. If you fear that a night on the town will turn into a morning nightmare, eat a cucumber right before you go to bed and your morning hangover pains will be lessened. Why? Because a cucumber not only contains a mix of B vitamins and sugar but also has electrolytes that will keep you hydrated and feeling great even after imbibing a bit too much of the “jolly good stuff.”



Do you want more good news? You know how your breath feels after eating stinky stuff like lox or pickled herring, some types of sausage or raw onion? Just reach for a slice of cucumber and the phytochemicals in it will kill the bacteria that cause bad breath and cavities.

For those of us who are always counting calories but never seem to win the battle of the bulge, try keeping a dish of cucumber slices nearby, sprin-

kled with a little salt and pepper. Not only will this snack keep you full all day, but cucumber contains almost all the vitamins you need daily – vitamin B vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin K1, fiber, potassium and manganese. Just one cucumber daily can take the place of a multi-vitamin. The carbs and the B vitamins will also give you an energy boost.



Since all of us are retirees and reaching the golden age of forgetfulness, you’ll be happy to know that cucumber is also high in copper, which is necessary for brain function. In 2014, a study published in *Aging Cell* found that the chemical known as festin, found in cucumber, can fight the damage caused by Alzheimer’s Disease.

Here are some other benefits of cucumber. Cucumber contains high levels of potassium which help regulate blood pressure by boosting electrolyte levels and negate the damaging effects of too much sodium. The high content of fiber in cucumbers will help keep your digestive system working to maintain regularity (another way of saying “forget the laxatives”). Want to detox? A 2013 study published in the journal *Filoterapia* found that cucumber has “a cleansing action within the body by removing accumulated pockets of old waste materials and chemical toxins.” The high content of magnesium, calcium and vitamin K1 in cucumbers will build your bones, the high water content and potassium makes it a mild diuretic that can fight bloating, the antioxidants will prevent the spread of free radical damage and the blend of nutrients in cucumber will boost your immune system.

But best of all? Ladies, do you remember the scene in *Sex and the City* in which Samantha Jones, one of Carrie Bradshaw’s friends, is shown preparing for a visit from the man in her life with slices of cucumber on her eyelids? Yes, there are nutrients in cucumber that help relieve inflammation. Placing fresh cucumber slices directly onto swollen areas will reduce puffiness within just a (continued on p. 5)

## CUCUMBERS ! *(Cont'd from page 4)*

few minutes. Massaging cucumber juice into your hair will help your hair look shiny and healthy. A mixture of cucumber juice and a few drops of lemon juice will refresh your skin.



Cucumber appears to be an amazing vegetable (although technically a fruit). It seems to have incredible regenerative powers due to its high nutritional content.

Perhaps as the benefits of cucumber become more widespread, it may join the apple as a wise adage,

**“A cucumber a day keeps the doctor away!”**

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Reference: “Replace Your Multivitamin and Fix a Hang-over with Cucumbers.” Originally published on [The AlernativeDaily.com](http://www.thealternativedaily.com/benefits-of-cucumbers/) ([http://www.thealternativedaily.com/benefits of cucumbers/](http://www.thealternativedaily.com/benefits-of-cucumbers/))

*Dr. Corine Lipset-Huberman has had experience at all levels of education. She spent the last 19 years prior to retirement as principal of the Village Elementary School in Syosset, NY.*

## WHY IS CRT INFLAMMATORY *(cont'd from page 2)*

students regardless of their racial identity have equal opportunities. We need to change policies that have created issues in American education for many years!

### Looking back to look forward

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court decided a school-assignment case on whether race could be a factor in maintaining diversity in K-12 schools. Chief Justice John Roberts’ opinion concluded: “*The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.*” When critical race theory is applied to education, it should look at how policies and practices in K-12 education contribute to researched racial inequalities such as racially segregated schools, the underfunding of minority-dominant school districts, disproportionate disciplining of African American students, barriers to gifted programs, and selective-admission high schools. And I’m not advocating the dismemberment of these programs/schools, but a careful looksee is in order to determine how to make these programs more racially balanced without losing quality.

### Extremism abounds on both sides

A recent poll by Parents Defending Education (a right-wing parents group) claimed some schools were teaching that “white people are inherently privileged, while Black and other people of color are inherently oppressed and victimized. Achieving racial justice and equality between racial groups requires discriminating against people based on their whiteness.” And finally that “the United States was founded on racism.” Thus, the debate continues, raising fears that students—especially white students—will be exposed to supposedly damaging or self-demoralizing ideas if critical race theory is adopted.

In my opinion we should do away with the term critical race theory and re-evaluate teaching and learning to ensure equity for each and every student!

*Kenneth Forman, Ph.D., serves on the faculty of the Educational Leadership program at Stony Brook University and has had extensive experience as an administrator in various New York public school systems.*

## Quarterly Query **AUTUMN 2021**

**COVID-19 has brought changes in our lifestyle from how we accomplish daily activities, to how we communicate with family and friends, and how we celebrate holidays.**

**Please share with us how you’ve adapted, what you’ve done to “survive” the isolation and pervasive anxiety of the past year and a half. Have you taken on a new hobby, learned a new skill, revisited an interest you never had time for?**

Please write and tell us your thoughts on this issue.

**Please send your thoughts to**  
[clipsethuberman@gmail.com](mailto:clipsethuberman@gmail.com)  
*(Kindly include your name and the district from which you retired.)*

## SUMMER QUARTERLY QUERY—VACCINE MANDATES

*As you know, since the July issue of this newsletter was published, much has happened in the area of vaccinations. In some states, vaccinations are mandatory for certain people – perhaps school children, teachers, health care workers. In some situations, persons attending theater, sports events, concerts, modes of transportation, any public gatherings may be asked to show proof of vaccination. In other states, there is furor over the issue. Indeed, there have been cases of physical harm, protest marches, riots and law suits over whether mandating vaccination is legal.*

*Just a short time ago, the CDC announced that they are recommending a booster shot for those over 65 and for those 18 and over who have certain medical conditions that put them at risk. It is also available for people in certain work situations in which they have close contact with the public. The booster availability was welcomed heartily by those who already are vaccinated but it has little effect on those who are absolutely against getting vaccinated at all. The issue addressed by our Quarterly Query is still with us: **Should vaccinations be mandatory and, if so, for whom and in what venues?** Here are responses from three of our Board members:*

Many states and some school districts are requiring teachers and other staff to obtain COVID vaccinations in order to return to in-person work. While the majority of teachers have been vaccinated, there are a few who refuse to comply. Some may have medical issues. Obviously, accommodations are required for these individuals who provide appropriate documentation.

Others cite religious objections even though the Supreme Court ruled in 1944 (*Prince v Massachusetts*) that the right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose the community or the child to communicable disease or to ill health or death.

There are a few people who cite freedom of choice as a basis for refusal. They misunderstand the meaning of freedom. John Locke, in *Two Treatises on Government*, described people in the state of nature having freedom but lacking stability. Therefore, they form communities to provide pro-

tection but, in return, they give up some basic rights. The nation's founders relied on Locke's theory in developing the Constitution.

Moreover, teachers are public employees who have a responsibility to protect children, many of whom are still not vaccinated. As public employees, they have greater accountability than people in the private sector. Certainly, teachers with strong convictions have a choice to leave the job. Several school employees have initiated legal action regarding mandated vaccinations even though most union leaders agree with the need to protect children and other staff members.

New York State now requires all students and staff in the State University system to be vaccinated in order to participate in on-campus instruction and activities. As a member of the United University Professors at Stony Brook, I join with our union in supporting the requirement.

**Edward Price**

The word mandatory frequently appears when the pros and cons of compulsory COVID vaccinations are the topic of debate. The ayes for mandatory vaccination overwhelmingly outweigh the nays. Consider the following data found in a recent *New York Times* Coronavirus Tracker report:

- 42.9 million cases of coronavirus have been diagnosed in the US.
- 688,000 people have died as a result of contracting the coronavirus in the US.
- Of these totals, NYS reported 2.4 million cases and 54,718 deaths.

With overwhelming statistics indicating the effectiveness of available vaccines, one wonders why there is such a loud debate about vaccine administration. Historically, vaccines have kept all of us free of contracting several serious diseases. Therefore, let's look at human nature as well as some noteworthy philosophical thoughts. Ponder the following:

- Are we too slow to respond or too fast to act on significant events? Is the cliché, "It ain't what you don't know that will hurt you," or is it "What you do know that ain't so," that is more dangerous? (from *The Mind Code* by Charles Bailey)
- Is it worthwhile to react to crackpot ideas flying in the face of scientific expertise? (*cont'd on p. 7*)

## **VACCINE MANDATES** *(cont'd from page 6)*

- Has the quantity of mis- and dis-information made us impervious to contrary evidence? Why are the most misinformed the most confident of their views? Do the naysayers fear a loss of free speech or personal freedom that will lead to less fun? (from research by David Denning and Justin Kruger)
- Is there a fear that coronavirus testing is overwhelmingly inaccurate? Has misinformation successfully reinforced cognitive bias?
- Have we forgotten the philosophical maxim of “the greatest good for the greatest number?” (from *Thinking Fast and Thinking Slow* by Daniel Kahneman) Or, as Star Trek’s Mr. Spock frequently asks, “Do the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one or, do the needs of one outweigh the needs of the many?” (from *Star Trek II: Wrath of Kahn*)
- Do those refusing to get vaccinated threaten our health as well as their own? Do the unvaccinated believe that “it’s all about me” rather than “it’s all about us”? (From *The Mind Code* by Charles Bailey)
- And finally . . . Are we fighting a pandemic of disease or a pandemic of ignorance?

**Martin Mandelker**

The question should vaccines be mandated for health care workers and school staff needs to be considered in terms of the larger context of public health and the well-being of our most vulnerable citizens, including people with disabilities and compromised immune systems, children too young to be vaccinated and adults with underlying health issues. This is not a philosophical and political debate. COVID-19 is a highly transmissible, serious and often lethal illness that is already responsible for the deaths of more than 700,000 people.

In recent weeks there has been a lot of media coverage about teachers, school staff, health care workers, including nurses and health aides in hospitals and nursing homes, who are opposed to health care mandates. They offer a number of arguments against vaccine mandates – some express concerns about the safety of vaccines, and others claim mandates violate their civil rights.

We are in a very different place in the fall of

2021 than we were last winter and early spring. The Delta variant of Covid-19 surged across the country this summer, in large part due to resistance to vaccines. Contrary to research early in the pandemic, children are just as likely as adults to become infected with the COVID-19 variant. The fact that little more than half of the country is fully vaccinated allows the Delta variant to continue to rage. Following an in-depth approval process, the FDA and CDC fully approved the Pfizer-BioTech booster vaccine in September. Moderna is expected to be approved in October. Clinical and real-world studies show that these vaccines are safe and prevent infection and hospitalization. The goal of the vaccine mandate is to stem the flood of infections and help to protect the vulnerable by reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The ACLU, which is known for its aggressive efforts to defend civil liberties, even when they are very unpopular, has stated that they see no problem with requiring COVID-19 vaccines. While we all have the fundamental right to bodily integrity and to make our own health care decisions, these rights are not absolute. They do not include the right to inflict harm on others. The permissibility of requiring vaccines for particular diseases depends on several factors: the disease is highly transmissible, serious and often lethal; the vaccines are safe and effective and there is no equally effective alternative available to protect public health. In their view COVID-19 meets all of these considerations. Although this disease is novel, vaccine mandates are not. Schools, health care facilities, and the military institutions have long required vaccination for contagious diseases like mumps and measles.

As an American, I value our civil liberties and our individual rights. But as a young girl in school, I also learned about the importance of our social contract with one another as citizens. Somehow I never saw these as contradictory precepts. I understood that in a democracy our safety and well-being depended on our willingness to stand up for and take steps to protect the most vulnerable in our society. Health care workers and school staff work daily with the most vulnerable in our society. It is time that they be required to be vaccinated.

**Mary Louise [Mel] Haley**

## CAN YOU HELP US REACH OUT TO RETIRED SCHOOL LEADERS ?

As retirees, we are an active group. We keep our minds active by reading, writing, and getting involved in political and/or charitable causes; we join computer clubs and take up new hobbies. Many of us keep our bodies active with gym memberships or participation in sports. NYSRSAS Board members also keep busy with the activities of this organization.

In order to keep our membership at a steady level, we seek former administrators or supervisors, whether recently retired or long-time retirees, who may be interested in the activities on which we focus. Perhaps you know someone who fits that bill. We hope you will consider your groups of friends/acquaintances/relatives, share with them what we are all about and encourage them to join us.

So, as a reminder, let's review what we have done in recent months :

- Endorsements: The NYSRSAS Board members researched opposing candidates running for state or federal office, reviewed their backgrounds, voting records and positions, and presented their findings at a special meeting prior to Election Day. The Board then voted to endorse candidates whose positions support our priorities in terms of education and benefits for seniors. All endorsements are made on a non-partisan basis.
- Periodically, we survey our membership asking you to indicate what areas or issues concern you and what you would like us to address and/or write about in our newsletter. We then follow up

on those concerns.

- When issues we regard as critical emerge on a national or state level, we schedule a focus group on that issue. Our members are always invited to participate. After we research an issue, we may publish a position paper, as we did with Black Lives Matter and the January 6, 2021 invasion of our Capitol.
- We provide print and electronic news and updates through this newsletter, occasional e-mails and our website. We address areas of concern to retirees, such as pensions, Social Security, educational matters, political issues that are a threat to the well-being of retirees and issues that are new to us as a nation such as the pandemic and its effect on education.
- We invite our members to participate by writing articles for our newsletter related to any area that may be of interest to our readership. "Quarterly Query" published in each newsletter also provides an opportunity for members to express their individual points of view.

Please stress to those who qualify for membership that NYSRSAS is an organization that will fight for the welfare, interests and concerns of retired school leaders, and address educational issues that affect the future of our schools. Those interested in joining should send an email to [info@nysrsas.org](mailto:info@nysrsas.org), stating their desire to join. Our membership chairperson will respond.



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