**Script for AAUW PowerPoint on Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Curriculum A Primer for AAUW Members**

**Frame 1:** There is a great deal of discussion on the curriculum taught in public schools regarding the topic of critical race theory. As a result, the AAUW Public Policy Committee felt it was important to educate our members about this topic and to consider the adoption of a resolution that supports a curriculum in our public schools that is both culturally responsive and inclusive.

**Frame 2:**  As you read these public policy priorities of AAUW, it becomes apparent that supporting efforts to ensure that teachers in our public schools are allowed to instruct students using strategies that are responsive to their cultural needs and using a curriculum that is inclusive and recognizes the accomplishments of all peoples- minorities, women, disabled- while also acknowledging persistent problems in our society due to our history- is critical. The work done in our public schools is essential to our belief in ending white supremacy and addressing structural and systemic racism.

**Frame 3:** You may be thinking, “Is this really a problem in Wisconsin?” The answer is yes… check out these headlines from local publications. There is pressure on our public-school officials to “dial down” the discussions on the issues of equity and racism. Legislators are using the “Critical Race Theory” terminology to describe curriculum which is taught in our schools. *(Read through these headlines… and on the next frame.)*

**Frame 4:** When you consider the new rules in place in Waukesha for classroom teachers, you can see how we are moving away from encouraging students to understand the importance of advocating for social change and we are moving toward efforts in censoring educators from displaying information that makes classrooms safer and more inclusive for all. It is important to recognize that a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum is not critical race theory.

**Frame 5:** So, what is critical race theory and how does it differ from a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum? Critical race theory is taught at the collegiate level, primarily in legal studies classes. It developed due to the belief that civil rights litigation was not being successful and had not produced meaningful reform. The question of what needs to be done for the American legal system to achieve social justice is key to critical race theory discussions. You can see then where efforts like the Black Lives Matter movement and making reforms in law enforcement develop when addressing that question.

A culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum encompasses 1) putting into practice strategies that will ensure all children can be successful in school by being sensitive and aware to cultural differences that may result in different learning needs, and 2) teaching about the contributions of all people, recognizing how our history has created the society we have today, and encouraging students to critically examine what can be done to make our world better.

Because a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum is what is taught in Wisconsin schools, we will focus on what that means by looking at the resources available to educators from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

The Wisconsin Model to Inform Culturally Responsive Practices shown here describes the beliefs, knowledge, and practices Wisconsin educators, schools, and districts need to reach and teach diverse students within their culturally responsive multi-level systems of support. Let’s take a closer look at this model.

**Frame 6:** (*Open the link so that the document can be reviewed.*) As you can see, culturally responsive practices are about equity. Wisconsin has some of the biggest gaps between achievement of white students and students of color. Children with disabilities, from poverty, and English language learners also deserve equitable outcomes. For more equitable outcomes to become a reality, educators must have a desire to achieve equitable outcomes (WILL), must be willing to gain cultural knowledge (FILL), and apply that knowledge (SKILL).

WILL and FILL alone will not change long-standing disproportionality in our schools and classrooms; educators must act. This SKILL step calls on educators to be courageous leaders in this work, assuming personal responsibility for catalyzing equitable conditions and outcomes for students. … This SKILL step compels school systems to recognize that our historical policies and practices have benefitted some of our students at the expense of others. Educators commit to adapting school to the diversity of their students, not expecting students or families to abandon who they are to be successful. … This SKILL step shows up every day for students across the school system. Culturally responsive schools purposely image the walls, halls, and curricular materials so that every student sees themselves, and their future selves, as positive, belonging and valued.

This document can be reviewed by you by going to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website.

**Frame 7:** Let’s now look at what an inclusive curriculum includes… since history and equity issues are integral parts of the social studies curriculum, it makes sense to examine Wisconsin’s Academic Standards for Social Studies. Public schools in Wisconsin follow these standards voluntarily, developing their curriculum based on the standards. Again, this document is available for review on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website. *Open link.* It is too broad to review in entirety with you now, but I will focus on a few pages:

*Go to pages v/vi:*

It is important to note that these academic standards are developed by a team of people- educators at all levels (elementary through college) from around the state and that community members and parents could provide feedback and comments to draft documents before they are approved.

*Go to pages 12,13, 14:*

There are six social studies strands… let me quickly highlight concepts from each of the strands…

Social Studies Inquiry Practices and Processes - advances in human knowledge come about not because people can memorize factoids or are great at filling out worksheets in school; rather, they come about when people ask questions and pursue those questions in reasoned self-critical ways. This is the essence of inquiry process in social studies, beginning with questions to be answered and the work needed to begin to answer them.

Behavioral Sciences Strand- students can compare our ways of life and those of other groups of people in the past and present; students need to know how institutions are maintained or changed and how they influence individuals, cultures, and societies.

Economics Strand- students learn how to be better producers, consumers, and economic citizens deciding what goods and services to provide and how to allocate limited resources for distribution and consumption, in a global economy marked by rapid technological change.

Geography Strand- knowledge of geography helps students to address the various cultural, economic, social, and civic implications of life in earth’s many environments.

History Strand- students need to understand their historical roots and those of others, and how past events have shaped their world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Reconstructing and interpreting historical events provides a needed perspective in addressing the past, the present, and the future.

Political Science Strand- knowledge about the structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary society is essential if young citizens are to develop civic responsibility.

An inclusive social studies curriculum will provide rich and diverse resources for students which demonstrate the value of all people, and which encourages students to question and consider how the past has impacted the present and what they can do to improve the future. One resource that provides educators with materials for use to create this inclusive social studies curriculum is the organization, **Learning for Justice***. Open link.* This group used to be called **Teaching Tolerance** but came to the realization that tolerance was not an adequate goal. Their work has evolved in the last 30 years, from reducing prejudice to tackling system injustice. **Learning for Justice** provides free resources for educators and community members that advance anti-bias education and social justice. *Go to the Frameworks link*. As you can see, social justice standards, teaching hard history- the influence of slavery, critical thinking, digital literacy, and teaching about the civil rights movement are frameworks used to develop resource materials for use.

**Frame 8: Learning for Justice** shared a blog on their website dealing with the impact of Critical Race Theory on the work of educators. *Open link.* The blog explains where the anti-critical race theory movement developed:

*“In September 2020,*[*the Trump Administration issued a memo*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/M-20-34.pdf)*to federal agencies directing them to identify and cancel any staff training programs that focus on “critical race theory” or “‘white privilege,’ or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil.” Weeks later,*[*President Trump issued an executive order*](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/28/2020-21534/combating-race-and-sex-stereotyping)*that purported “to combat offensive and anti-American race and sex stereotyping and scapegoating” by restricting the federal government and its contractors from conducting diversity training that examined systemic racism, white privilege and other issues involving race and gender bias.*[*This executive order was revoked by President Biden*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/)*on his first day in office, but its contents have since been replicated by state legislatures.”*

The blog also aids educators on how to navigate the anti-CRT movement.

It is important to note that a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum supports equity for all students, especially those with underrepresented histories, and is more reflective of the collective experiences of all societal groups.

**Frame 9:** We can not be afraid to address the dark chapters of American history. We can not whitewash our past. Educators must be allowed to create culturally responsive classrooms and teach an inclusive curriculum which encourages students to question and debate issues related to social justice, equity, and racism. It may make us uncomfortable; it may make us feel bad or ashamed, but it is not designed to blame or be anti-American. It is meant to help our children learn, grow, and create a better world. It is for this reason, that the WI-AAUW Public Policy Committee is recommending the approval of a new resolution.

**Frame 10:** *Read the resolution.* Do you have any questions or comments?