



PARENTS DEFENDING EDUCATION

ACTION

Let's Talk About: Affinity Groups

- **What is an affinity group?** Affinity groups are school-sponsored groups that deliberately separate students and staff into groups based on their skin color, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Affinity Groups may also be labeled using other terms like “safe spaces” and “healing spaces.”
- **Why are they bad?** Affinity groups may sound benign, noble even. But it is neither benign nor noble to separate students by race or any other immutable trait, even in the name of “inclusion.” These groups teach children that our sameness and our differences are found in our immutable traits like skin color. University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education encourages students to “focus on whiteness as a racial category.”

*In **some** cases they are unconstitutional.* Affinity groups that divide students by their skin color and only permit students of a particular skin color to join the group may violate the 14th Amendment, which guarantees equal protection under the law.

- **Examples:** Look at [PDE’s Indoctrination Map](#) for examples from your state to share with your local citizen activists and lawmakers.

Affinity Group proponents may use these phrases, so we broke them down for you.

When they say...	They mean...
Sharing a common background or interest	Students are divided by fixed traits (sometimes called immutable traits) and expected to bond and form relationships based on those traits rather than shared interests like sports, art, reading, or other meaningful extracurricular activities.
Diversity and inclusion	Affinity groups categorize students by skin color, sex, sexual orientation, and ethnicity under the guise of creating a “diverse” and “inclusive” environment. These practices are anything but diverse and inclusive because they limited students by fixed traits and create a divisive environment.

Affinity groups are “safe spaces” for students who share an identity, such as a common race or heritage, to discuss mutual concerns	Schools are not welcoming to minority students. To counter that, schools must create formal groups and spaces that help children bond over these shared, fixed traits.
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If you are asked...	You can say...
Why can't students who are minorities hang out with one another?	Of course they can. But, schools should not limit group participation by traits like skin color or sex.
But our student population is diverse and teachers aren't, how can students adapt?	All people of all backgrounds can be great teachers and create positive learning environments for students. We do not need divisive affinity groups to make students feel included.
But what if students who are minorities feel left out in majority-white schools?	This is exactly why students should be taught to focus on character rather than skin color. Creating truly inclusive and healthy environments for students means cultivating positive character traits and encouraging students to bond with their peers regardless of race, sex, etc.