How Pollyanna's Racial Literacy Curricula Can Provide a Lens into Culturally Sensitive Implementation

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May 19th, 2025

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In partnership with

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Abstract

In recent years, American schools have increasingly adopted racial literacy curricula to address equity and inclusion in the education space. However, these efforts have been met with extreme political polarization and implementation challenges. This paper examines education non-profit Pollyanna's K–12 racial literacy program as a case study, using educator and student surveys and interviews to analyze its effectiveness. Findings indicate that gradual, feedback-driven rollout, robust teacher training, and transparent parent engagement are essential to successful implementation. While students generally welcome the curriculum, teacher discomfort and community resistance can hinder adoption, especially in politically conservative settings. These results underscore that culturally competent, community-centered approaches are vital for advancing sustainable racial literacy education.

Introduction

In recent years, conversations around race, racism, and diversity have moved to the forefront of educational discourse, prompting many schools to introduce formal racial literacy curricula. A racial literacy curriculum is designed to equip educators and students with the critical skills needed to understand, discuss, and engage with racial dynamics and systemic racism in thoughtful and constructive ways. However, as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have gained prominence, they have also become increasingly politicized, with some communities pushing back against the incorporation of race-related topics in school settings. This contentious environment has made the implementation of racial literacy programs both vital and challenging.

One organization leading efforts to provide structured resources for racial literacy education is Pollyanna, a New York based nonprofit dedicated to helping academic institutions build stronger, kinder communities. Pollyanna has developed a comprehensive racial literacy curriculum for both Kindergarten through 8th grade (K-8) and high school students (9-12). The K-8 curriculum is broken down by grade level, introducing students to the concept of race and exploring how race has been socially constructed in the United States. Lessons are designed to be age-appropriate, gradually building students' understanding as they progress through the grades. The high school curriculum takes a different approach, organizing materials by academic subject to help educators weave racial literacy into a variety of disciplines, from English and history to science and art. The curriculum is coupled with a position paper, which aids in implementation, addressing how to react to frequently asked questions and common situations.

In addition to curriculum development, Pollyanna fosters youth leadership through its Teen Council, a nationwide group of high school students who meet regularly to discuss DEI issues and the realities of navigating these conversations in their own schools. The council provides a student-led space where teens can advocate for more inclusive practices in their communities. By combining structured curriculum offerings with youth empowerment, Pollyanna positions itself as a key actor in advancing racial literacy education in a sustainable and student-centered way.

This research paper seeks to investigate the role Pollyanna plays in making safe and sustainable spaces for conversations around racial literacy and DEI in schools. To explore this, we conducted surveys of teachers and administrators who have implemented the Pollyanna curriculum in their schools. We also surveyed members of the Teen Council and conducted in-depth interviews with a select group of these educators and students to gain a richer, qualitative understanding of the curriculum's impacts and challenges.

Our findings suggest that while Pollyanna's curriculum is widely seen as a valuable and necessary tool, its implementation can be difficult. Teachers and administrators noted that mastering the curriculum and integrating it thoughtfully into daily lessons requires significant time and professional development. Interestingly, the majority of resistance to the curriculum comes not from students, who often expressed enthusiasm for the material, but from educators themselves, particularly given the heightened political scrutiny around DEI initiatives. Nevertheless, both students and teachers reported that Pollyanna's programs helped create safer, more open spaces for conversations about race, indicating that with sufficient institutional support, the curriculum has the potential to foster lasting change.

Literature Review

In recent years, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) curricula have become a topic of great debate and controversy in the United States. On one hand, some argue that DEI is a form of ideological indoctrination, and on the other, many advocate for the implementation of these programs to advance the goal of creating more accepting classroom environments. As a result of these discussions, there is a growing body of literature that examines the impact, challenges, and successes of DEI curricula in educational settings. This literature review explores the various dimensions of these programs, evaluating whether they live up to their goals of fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments, and how best to ensure that goal is met.

The reviewed articles come from varied perspectives and experts in the field, and include empirical studies, theoretical discussions, and case studies, offering insights into the implementation and effectiveness of DEI and related programs. By reviewing the existing literature, we aim to identify points of consensus among researchers to further inform our own evaluation of Pollyanna's Racial Literacy curricula. We are specifically looking for successful implementation strategies, considering socio-political factors within the American education sphere.

Teacher Training for DEI

The consensus between articles discussing teacher training for DEI and CRT curricula was that long-term and hands-on teacher training resulted in the most effective long term implementation results. Research indicates that professional development programs that are sustainable, context-specific, and reflective result in more confident, culturally competent educators

and more effective delivery of DEI-related content (Tichnor-Wagner, 2016; Wang, 2023). In contrast, one-off workshops or superficial training often fail to equip teachers with the tools and frameworks necessary to address complex classroom dynamics or foster inclusive learning environments.

The literature suggests that in order to create inclusive classrooms, teachers must also be prepared to teach children for whom English is a second language (ESL) and children with disabilities. Roodsari (2023) discusses how, with proper training, educators can use DEI programs to support ESL students coming from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. With guidance, teachers are prepared to create inclusive environments that support the students academically and socially, helping them adjust to diverse perspectives. Also, Bialka et. al (2024) found that teachers who received social model training were more likely to view and discuss disability as a form of human difference rather than a deficit. This combination of benefits helps create an inclusive classroom which considers a variety of marginalized identities and their intersections.

Additionally, case studies from K-12 schools showed a positive correlation between administrative support for DEI and CRT curricula and effective DEI and CRT programs in the classroom. When administrators provide funding, clear policy mandates, and support for school and district-wide programs, teachers are more empowered to incorporate DEI content into their classrooms (Corsino & Fuller, 2021; Grossman et al.). Robinson (2024) suggests that for these curricula to thrive, there must be significant engagement with DEI in the hiring process for educators and at the student level. As a result of these findings, we focused our own research on understanding implementation guides and scripting which heavily integrate curriculum into the day to day agenda. Additionally, this research pushed us to investigate the role of school structure and administration in aiding the implementation of Pollyanna.

Curriculum Structure

The structure of DEI curricula plays a crucial role in determining how effectively these programs foster inclusivity and equity. Past literature highlights the importance of embedding DEI principles throughout the curriculum, rather than relegating them to isolated modules or extracurricular activities. For example, Estaiteyeh and DeCoito's (2023) explored the long-term impact of a program that prepared teachers to implement differentiated instruction in K-12 STEM classrooms. This pedagogy seeks to address the varying needs of students by offering a variety of lesson structures and teaching strategies, including direct instruction, small group discussions, and

flexible grouping. The goal of differentiated instruction is to create academic progress and success for every student, regardless of their prior background or abilities. The authors found that after a 12-week training program, students are more engaged in lessons and excited to participate. While Pollyanna's accompaniment piece does not exactly follow the structure of a differentiated instruction, we were curious to see if the combination of this tool and the curriculum itself provides an aid to implementation. Additionally, if there are other supplementary tools created by educators to best facilitate its integration while considering the unique needs of students, we were interested to see if they follow this model.

Implementation: K-12 and Beyond

DEI and CRT-related curricula span a variety of subjects and grade levels. For younger students, implementation of DEI may take the form of class circles, structured play, or social-emotional learning (SEL) activities that promote empathy, respect for diversity, and conflict resolution. Bialka et al. (2024) note that SEL strategies, when paired with multicultural storytelling and inclusive language practices, help children internalize values of fairness and community from an early age.

In secondary school, DEI and CRT curricula tend to integrate directly into English, History, and even STEM. Students examine literature from numerous perspectives, explore historical narratives that center marginalized communities, or ask critical questions about systems of power and privilege. Smith (2012) theorizes that contributions from educators and students about their diverse backgrounds and experiences can increase awareness and thoughtful behavior among students.

In science and math classrooms, as Estaiteyeh and DeCoito (2023) show, DEI can disrupt stereotypes regarding who "belongs" in STEM, introducing students to the contributions of scientists from underrepresented backgrounds. Later, this representation might lead students to a DEI career-oriented program such as Pellissier et al.'s workshop and mentorship-based program for engineering students. Since Pollyanna's STEM and Humanities curricula for their 9-12 curriculum is broken up in a comparable way, we focused on investigating if teachers and students report increased representation, enthusiasm and curiosity from their students.

Critical Assessment

While these studies praise DEI curricula for fostering more inclusive environments and improving classroom engagement, there remain gaps in the empirical measurement of classroom outcomes. Many studies prioritize qualitative improvements, such as shifts in student attitudes, teacher confidence, or classroom climate, over standardized measures of academic success. Corsino and Fuller (2021) emphasize that without rigorous evaluation frameworks, the long-term efficacy of DEI programs remains difficult to substantiate. Therefore, they advocate for rigorous analysis of these qualitative improvements, combining feedback regarding student performance and data measuring life success.

Furthermore, while DEI initiatives may increase classroom engagement, particularly among those from historically marginalized backgrounds, implementation often faces several systemic challenges. A common theme in the literature is the inconsistency of DEI adoption across schools and districts, often due to disparities in funding, administrative priorities, and local political climates. While many schools would like to increase faculty diversity, integrate DEI more deeply into required courses, and offer structured DEI training for both faculty and students, those opportunities are not always possible (Grossman et al., 2022).

The literature argues that the success of DEI and CRT curricula is dependent on the presence of specific training, support, and planning in classrooms and schools. These discussions of past implementation of DEI in education, as well as potential challenges today, shaped our research question. To examine the effects of DEI and CRT curricula in K-12 classrooms, specific measurable successes and failures were necessary. Classroom engagement, as reported by teachers and students, is a measurable factor correlated with academic success, student well-being, and healthy social connections within classrooms. With this experiment, the goal was to study qualitative data on a larger scale than the prior literature and analyze it with measurable data.

Data & Methods

In order to move forward with our survey and interview plan, we first began with a review of Pollyanna's curriculum package and a literature review on the different aspects of implementing and sustaining a Racial Literacy or DEI Curriculum. Through collecting and analyzing these sources, our team was able to situate ourselves in the academic and political landscape of DEI curricula. Our findings from the previous section informed the makeup of our surveys as well as the questions we

asked in our interviews. With this data collection, we knew we wanted to get information on the reception of the curriculum and critiques on it in a slightly quantitative format, so we created two surveys.

The first survey targeted implementers of the curriculum, including teachers, professors, administrators and parents. Outside of demographic information, the survey linked here contained questions about student and teacher experiences, barriers to implementation, ease of implementation, support from administration, and the role of Pollyanna's curriculum in educational environments. Working with Casper Caldarola, the CEO of the non-profit, the survey was disseminated via email to a dataset of the 5,155 contacts who downloaded the curriculum since its creation in 2020. 40% of the emails given to us were not in use or were linked to teachers who were on break or sabbatical. This outreach resulted in 19 survey responses from educators.

The second survey targeted Pollyanna's Teen Council, a group of 8th through 12th grade student activists who work towards the promotion of DEI and Racial Literacy in their schools. It is important to note that the teen council has not experienced Pollyanna's Racial Literacy Curricula. Instead, through the survey, we aimed to identify their perceptions of the educational landscape across the country, and what they believe the barriers of implementation are on a national level for any form of DEI or Racial Literacy Curricula, including specialized History and English courses. Similarly to the implementor version of the survey, we were given a contact list of the 119 students currently on the teen council and sent the survey to each one. In response, we received 7 survey responses.

From the demographic questions in the survey we learn that the large majority of implementers are affiliated with private schools (94%) and that they are disproportionately represented on the East and West Coasts of the United States. 6 were from California, 4 from New York, 2 from Massachusetts, 1 from New Jersey and 2 from Maryland. We also had 1 respondent from Illinois and 2 from Georgia. These implementers were teachers, professors, Directors of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as well as psychologists.

The last question on each survey was asking the recipient whether they consented to being interviewed for our project. Ten implementers indicated they might be interested in being interviewed and through Google Calendar, four scheduled interviews with us. Four students on the Teen Council indicated that they might be interested in being interviewed, and two finalized and scheduled interviews with us.

Similarly to the creation of the surveys, we wrote two interview guides. Both interview guides were created with the goal of investigating certain trends in the survey data. They included about 15 - 20 questions with 3 - 4 sections, including introductions, impressions and thoughts about moving forward. Our implementor interviews delved deeper into the ways the teachers used the curriculum throughout the school day. It asked about how students perceived the conversations that the curriculum probed, what teachers felt comfortable and uncomfortable speaking about, and what they thought could be improved upon. On the other hand, the student interview guides asked more questions about the culture at their school, and how it was influenced by the state and local political landscape as well as parent and administrative opinions. With this information, we also inquired about what programs that exist in their schools that broach topics under the umbrella of DEI and Racial Literacy.

The interviews were conducted over Zoom, semi-structured, and recorded with the interviewee's consent. Prior to the interview, subjects were sent a consent form which informed them of where their information was going.

After concluding interviews, we qualitatively coded our interview transcripts and survey data for trends in comments about political polarization, barriers to implementation, and social acceptance of Racial Literacy Curriculum. From our survey results, we knew to look for information surrounding these themes. This process included finding similar sentiments between educators and corroborating those with the experiences of the students on the Teen Council.

Findings & Analysis

Implementers of Pollyanna's curriculum find it to be fairly long lasting, but suggest there is room for it to be streamlined for accessibility and sustained use. Of the nineteen implementers surveyed, twelve have continued to use the curriculum in some form. While some attrition stems from concerns about the curriculum's perceived political stance, teachers more commonly report that, over time, they stray from the formal structure and begin integrating elements into their standard lessons. This raises an important question: how can we most effectively incorporate these lesson plans once they are provided?

Implementation

Our first key finding from the data is that schools must implement Pollyanna's curriculum in specific ways to formulate a seamless implementation strategy. One of the most significant takeaways was the speed at which the curriculum should be introduced. In our conversation with Dan Rogoff, a school administrator with experience with Pollyanna's curriculum, he stressed the importance of a gradual approach, stating that implementation of new programs is often a slow process. This is supported by other survey data as well. A fourth grade private school teacher from New York who had implemented the curriculum once before, and is now in her first year at a new school, also explained that implementation takes time. Similar sentiments were shared by a middle school principal in California. Rogoff explains that the reasoning behind the gradual implementation is that it allows for teacher feedback throughout the whole process. He stresses that teachers, like everyone, are creatures of habit and having a longer adjustment period is beneficial for all involved. This longer adjustment period includes asking faculty members to try one lesson at a time, and allowing them time to report back.

From this finding, we can discern that a slow process allows for effective implementation, although it may not feel particularly effective at the moment. A slower approach could help aid in decreasing issues such as parent pushback or feelings of white guilt among students, as the extra time allows teachers to explore and prove the value of these lessons to themselves, the parents, and the students. Vanessa Gutierrez, a Director of DEIB from Maryland, described a time when a teacher "had tears in her eyes" talking about how rich of a conversation she had with her students was about race and skin color. From this example we can see how powerful the curriculum can be when teachers and students have time to deeply engage with the information. In addition, it would be especially beneficial if throughout this process there were mechanisms in place to collect feedback and concerns from teachers, students, and parents. An approach focused on feedback would also likely contribute to a more conducive school environment where the curriculum is not viewed with hostility, as the interested parties do not feel as if the curriculum is forced upon them.

Another topic discussed briefly in some interviews was the importance of teacher and administrator training for successful implementation. These training resources should address the feelings of teachers, something mentioned by Gutierrez. She explained how this curriculum is very different from what teachers have been taught growing up, so it can be hard for some to understand the importance of teaching about topics that have long been left undiscussed. The curriculum is

much more likely to succeed if both teachers and administrators are trained beforehand with a hands-on approach. Therefore, Pollyanna's curriculum should be partnered with their training sessions centered on providing necessary resources to teachers and administrators before implementation in the classroom.

On the administrative side, having school leaders, from directors of DEI to the principals, supporting the teachers is invaluable. One way is simply assisting with training. Alejandra Navarro, director of DEI at a school in San Francisco's Bay Area, described how in the first few years of implementation many teachers were not yet comfortable with the content, so she modeled what lessons could look like and gave them resources that allowed them to scale down or up based on their comfort level. Having this support supplements the training programs from Pollyanna, as resources from the administration of a school will be more tailored to those specific teacher's needs and often more accessible.

Another way the administration can assist teachers' implementation is communicating with parents. Namely, Gutierrez suggested having the administrators field questions regarding the curriculum, as opposed to teachers. She explained that at her school, when families ask questions, the administrators take the time to engage and answer them so teachers can remain focused on the students. Rogoff also emphasized the importance of administrative support, especially when interfacing with parents. He stated how important it is to have administrators reference Pollyanna curriculum at events like back to school nights to make sure they acknowledge directly that they are using the curriculum. Through this clear communication, administrators and teachers can feel more comfortable and confident in the use of the curriculum.

Combating Political Polarization

The introduction of Pollyanna's curriculum caused some division in school communities. In fact, five of the nineteen survey respondents found the curriculum could be "divisive" rather than "inclusive." One retired middle school teacher from California and Massachusetts thought that the curriculum, despite showcasing an unadulterated version of American history, failed to "give white children a positive anti-racist role model that they could see as heroic and could emulate" and "BIPOC children a heroic socially inclusive role to emulate." It is important to note that resistance disproportionately came from educators in the South, and that our data is heavily skewed to Massachusetts, New York and California residents.

However, the large majority of survey respondents had a more favorable view of Pollyanna's curriculum. In fact, a second and fourth grade teacher from California, stood in direct opposition to the concerned parent with her survey responses. She found that Pollyanna's curriculum for those age levels were "very developmentally appropriate, engaging, and fairly easy to implement." This conflict in responses to the curriculum demonstrates a potentially foundational issue in education as a whole: political ideologies create barriers to effective implementation. Two specific issues that interviewees highlighted were 1.) that the curriculum needed to be more approachable and 2.) mitigating the ostracization of white students from these conversations.

One of the points Marie Hannan-Mandel, an English literature professor at a college in upstate New York, emphasized was the strategic use of non-triggering language in order to make racial literacy topics more approachable. She talks about avoiding terms like "critical race theory" or even the name "Pollyanna" when engaging with her largely conservative students, noting that "there is a lot of resistance to that [here]… it's seen as an imposition of liberal views." This highlights how word choice can act as an obstacle to participation. Even the perception of academic or ideological framing (e.g., critical race theory, or CRT) can make students feel isolated before the substance of the discussion can be reached. Hence, effective racial literacy implementation may require more adaptive, localized curriculum framing or scripting that ensures a tailored reflection of regional political and cultural realities.

Hannan-Mandel also repeatedly mentions the challenge of white students feeling blamed around the concepts of privilege and race. She says, "White privilege is something that's very difficult to teach up here." Another implementor notes that "they see that as racism against them," suggesting that defensiveness or a notion of reverse discrimination acts as a barrier to racial discourse. There is a deep politicization that is bred into racial literacy curricula through situations like this, which creates socio-political barriers to its implementation. A student from the South voiced similar issues. He describes how his school is very much a bubble in the wider community, which is more conservative. He states that "it's gotten pretty difficult because we've had students in the past years move out because they thought they were not being heard" and clarifies that these were often conservative students.

To make topics more approachable, framing racial literacy as a mutual understanding instead of a moral correction may be helpful in bridging gaps. This might mean adapting the curriculum to use universal values like fairness, empathy, or storytelling instead of more academic terminology, throughout the curriculum, not just for younger grade levels.

Lastly, the importance of local trust and instructor mediation is evidently highlighted in Hannan-Mandel's interview. The speaker's long-term presence in the community and her acknowledgment of local experiences made students more open to challenging material. Her emphasis on "asking them to question their assumptions" without judgment builds a pedagogical bridge of trust, making hard conversations possible. From this we can learn that support and training for educators, especially those that work in conservative or underserved regions should focus on culturally competent communication, not just direct adherence to the curricula.

Along this vein, many survey respondents sought to personalize Pollyanna's curriculum for their students. As one 8th grade history teacher from California puts it, she "cherry-picked and then altered some [lesson plans] that work for what [she] teach[es]." In fact, five of the nineteen survey respondents explicitly stated that they amend Pollyanna's curriculum to fit their students and school.

Pollyanna's success depends not only on its content, but on its delivery, framing, and the cultural terrain in which it is implemented. As this interview reveals, oftentimes, before a single word of curriculum is even read, political polarization, community mistrust, and fears of judgment or exclusion raise barriers. By prioritizing localized, non-partisan implementation strategies that center on curiosity over ideology and connection over correction, racial literacy incentives can be made even more effective.

Addressing Parent Pushback To Combat Political Polarization

One crucial element in combating political polarization throughout implementation of the curriculum is considering and accommodating parent perspectives. Parents play a unique role in the political climate of a school's population, and that often affects how certain policies and curricula are received. There were two parents who filled out our survey, and both had issues with the introduction of Pollyanna's curriculum. Both cases stemmed from an implementation strategy which left parents out of the loop in their children's education. One parent, from Georgia, stated that the school their child attended had implemented Pollyanna "without informing parents" prior. This caused outrage and confusion within the community, from students to teachers to parents. The other parent, from California's Bay Area was concerned about how age appropriate the curriculum was. He noted that his child was being taught a book that was developmentally too advanced for his grade level. In these situations, parent's seemed to feel a loss of control which bred ambivalence towards Pollyanna's curriculum, even though the issue stemmed from its implementation, not content. One disadvantage of providing a freely accessible curriculum is that regardless of the

resources available, there is no way to guarantee an implementation strategy. Without conscientious protocol, conflicts may arise.

Dan Rogoff discussed this phenomenon of parent pushback.. He explains that issues develop when parents feel that "a teacher is pushing an agenda, or a school is pushing an agenda, rather than just, [...], broadening an approach to history." In fact the California parent, noted that oftentimes, his impressions of the discussions his child has at school feels like "closed discussions," that you can not push back on for socio-political reasons.

Students feel this contention between parents and the school administration as well. When students were asked if conversations about DEI could be had comfortably at home with parents, many indicated that it depended on the parents' personal opinions and connections to DEI. One student from South noted that, for them, it was more easily discussed because their parents were of an immigrant background, and thus understood the importance of DEI and were more receptive to it. However, they commented that wealthier parents seemed "more ignorant to issues related to DEI", and that with those parents conversations about DEI would potentially not be well received. Contrastingly, the student from California noted that while there were a couple students who didn't feel comfortable discussing conversations around DEI at home, she feels she is comfortable and most people she knows are. This suggests that the integration of DEI curricula should account for the differences in familiarity that parents may have with related topics.

Creating a system in which administrators work with parents and teachers to best support their students is the primary goal. The interviewees illustrated the need for conversations about defining the roles of adults in implementation. According to Gutierrez, there is a cognitive dissonance in what teachers and administrators hope their students understand, and what is understood at home. She explained how important it is to close that gap, so there needs to be "understanding on the part of the parents as to why we're doing what we do." One approach to accomplishing this would be prioritizing external communication and ensuring resources are available for parents to understand what is being taught with the curriculum. This may look like providing lesson plans, information sessions, meetings with administrators, and more. Crucially, this communication should be collaborative. Allowing parents to inquire about potential concerns and participate in the process of implementation, has the potential to create a cohesive, community approach which achieves harmony between the school and home.

Making sure the administration acts as a go between for parents and teachers is also useful, as discussed above. Gutierrez suggested having administrators field questions regarding the

curriculum, as opposed to teachers so the latter can remain focused on their students. She discussed that considering the political climate, there is a fear around teaching about racial literacy that "people will come after you" and a lack of support from administration only amplifies this challenge. Alejandra Navarro from California expressed similar concerns. She explained that by helping teachers respond to parents, teachers feel supported and like they're not "under attack for doing something that they've been told to do by the institution." Through this clear communication, administrators and teachers can feel more comfortable and confident in the use of the curriculum, without alienating parents from the process.

Conclusion

Our research shows that while Pollyanna's racial literacy curriculum offers a powerful tool for fostering inclusive educational spaces, its success relies heavily on thoughtful, localized, and community-centered implementation. Because of the politicized nature of the education landscape as well as subjects surrounding Racial Literacy, we find that the content of the curriculum often gets conflated with a political agenda. Educators and students largely recognized the curriculum's value in promoting open dialogue and critical thinking about race, identity, and systemic inequality. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in navigating political polarization, parental concerns, and the emotional demands placed on educators. Successful implementation depends not only on gradual, flexible integration and robust teacher and administrator training, but also on strong administrative support and transparent communication with parents.

Our first policy recommendation is to adopt a gradual, feedback-based implementation approach. This looks like, for example, having teachers implement one lesson per week, and having an established time to speak with administrators about the lesson. Second, we recommend investing in localized, culturally competent educator training. This can look like online programs or workshops, or having administrators who have DEI training setting aside a little time every week to connect with teachers about the material. Lastly, we recommend establishing sustainable, collaborative communication channels with parents. Communicating the content of the lesson plan, the reason behind it, and allowing for questions builds trust and clarifies misconceptions.

Ultimately, the path forward for racial literacy initiatives like Pollyanna's lies in embracing collaboration, among teachers, administrators, students, and families, to create learning environments rooted in trust, curiosity, and mutual respect. By centering community needs and

emphasizing the shared values of fairness, empathy, and historical understanding, schools can better ensure that racial literacy education becomes both sustainable and transformative.

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