

# **Decolonizing Stand for Children**

## **The irony of Stand's CARE project**

“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change...” -- Audre Lorde

### **Part I**

#### **Introduction**

##### **A truly anti-racist Stand for Children would cease to exist**

Stand for Children (SfC or Stand) is very much a player in the past and current educational-political scene and debates around public school reform in Indianapolis.

As a part of this reform conversation, Stand for Children automatically endorses the Black Lives Matter movement by definition. Thus, due to its politics, Stand supports these initiatives by embracing anti-racism/anti-Blackness, and more importantly, is behind the Center for Antiracist Education (CARE) project (<https://antiracistfuture.org/>).

Nonetheless, a review of Stand’s foundation, which will be deconstructed in this analysis, reveals CARE as a simple ploy created in order to deflect or redirect attention. Stand points a finger implying that racism is “out there” somewhere and must be discredited and abandoned. This is all a means to camouflage the inherent racism in Stand’s own DNA.

So, what’s going on? From the perspective of this commentary, under the present microscope of the critically conscious global BLM movement, CARE is prolonging the inevitable because a truly anti-racist Stand for Children would cease to exist.

#### **Pt I-A**

It’s not what Stand does directly or intentionally; nonetheless, the issue is Stand promotes white supremacy: they are not anti-black as much as they are pro-white basically by way of standardization and Standards Based Education (SBE), as well as those who fund Stand.

- Question: If CARE intends to “Empower teachers to identify racism in learning materials,” will CARE also empower teachers to identify racism in the Stand for Children organization?
- Question: Will CARE itself unpack SfC and see if SfC’s DNA has any racism?

I hope that Stand does not think that racism is some dark water out there in society and they and CARE are on the dry shore ready to launch the project. The irony here is that if Stand for Children looks down, their feet are wet.

The Standards-Based Education (SBE) reform movement, which calls for clear, measurable standards for all school students, actually enables Whiteness.

The Indianapolis charter and Innovative schools Stand supports have to meet Indiana State Standards and have students’ academic success and school rankings determined by the standardized testing concept--which is based on Eugenics (Loflin, 2013). This standardization paradigm (i.e. The Matrix\* of the US dominant culture) maintains “Whiteness” because the standards are Eurocentric. If this assertion is questionable, we can ask: Are the standards based on the cultures, languages, and epistemologies of Asians, Africans, or Australian and North/South American Aboriginals? The answers are no. Reflecting the “Master Narrative” (Jiménez, 2010), the standards are Eurocentric.

## **We must interrogate the possible link between standardization and white dominance**

Authentic forms of public school democracy which are based on the diversity of the pluralistic American population have been replaced by charters with their private boards and schools, some of which are funded by some of the same conglomerates that influence the Standards.

These corporations and their subsidiary companies or divisions also write the very standardized tests being discussed. If citizens/taxpayers just unquestionably accept Standards, they also unquestionably accept white dominance, as the Standards are the voice of white dominance. By contrast, challenging the Standards calls into question white dominance by putting a target on an inequality that is very visible everywhere (Weilbacher, 2012).

To the extent what SfC advocates for “better and equal” education standards for all children (Stand for Children, 2021a) by what guidelines are such educational standards for all children deemed “better and equal”?

To the extent SfC believes “Every child in every neighborhood should have access to a great school,” and a “high quality education” (School choice, 2021b), the relevant questions are: by what guidelines are such schools deemed “great”? How is a “high quality education” (Loflin, 2017) determined?

They are definitely not SfC’s own criteria. If SfC is to be taken seriously by the public, the corporate world, and especially their funders, such standards must be those of the Indiana Department of Education, and consequently the national SBE movement.

Their focus on standardization to determine “better and equal” has helped to make this white dominance virtually invisible to SfC staff and board. Because of SfC’s own “whiteness-ness,” they do not see endorsing Standardization/SBE as harmful. Until they do, Stand and Whiteness are one and the same.

### **Finally, the bottom line: Stand is stuck**

Yes, Stand is stuck. Its board doesn't realize they're in a cul-de-sac of political obligations, a position which actually disproves Stand's concern for *all* children. Due to its innate support of SBE, people of color and poor whites can't look to Stand for their liberation as described in “What is a quality education for urban students?” (Loflin, 2017). The bottom line is Stand won't question or undermine the Corporate Whiteness Matrix by which it is financed.

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### *Whiteness Defined*

Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. It is a “standpoint,” a place from which White people look at themselves, at others, and at society. Also, “Whiteness” refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked, invisible, and unnamed (DiAngelo, 2011) particularly to members of the dominant white culture. In other words, Whiteness is so ubiquitous and subtle, like a fish does not know water, most white folks don't recognize Whiteness and its multiple “innovative” drawbacks and pitfalls which infect our common humanity and common good.

\*Morpheus explains “The Matrix” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqxwtEdxOCw>

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