



Roanoke Change Academy Session Notes and Resources



Session 1 – Antiracist Education

We'll also post these notes and resources (without the zoom links) so that you can always go back to them: www.bookcityroanoke.com/change.

This session focused on Antiracist Education and featured Councilmember Anita J. Price and Angela Wimberly.

Some notes:

- 55 people attended the session via Zoom.
- Councilmember Price started us off with some data on the demographics of Roanoke.
- 40% of the City budget goes to City schools. The RCPS School Board guides those investments.
- “You can’t address what you don’t first acknowledge”
 - From page 54: “if we cannot identify racial inequity, then we will not be able to identify racist policies.”
- Consider: does this policy cause harm to anyone? Then: does it help?
- We touched on PTA resource disparity based on neighborhood wealth. Relationships across schools was suggested. What policy would reduce the disparity?
- We touched on content and to what degree African-American History is integrated into curriculum. **Go deeper with your own experience and recommendations from the Virginia Commission on African American History in our follow-up survey.**

TAKE THE SURVEY: <https://forms.gle/B3vyC3ShXhXa91Fx8>

- Society was built by White able-bodied men for how they navigate through life. Consider how schools and other public spaces are White spaces and how they could be re-envisioned.
- Colorblindness sets people up for failure

Tangible Actions:

- Keep having these hard conversations
- If you live in a neighborhood with a more well-funded PTA, consider adopting another school to support
- Ask local schools what they need—it may not be money or books, but could be your time
- Look at the local school board policies through the lens of antiracism. Roanoke City Public Schools policies are available at:
<https://roanoke.ss7.sharpschool.com/cms/one.aspx?objectId=693661> and
<https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/roacps/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>
 - When reviewing policies and practices, ask: does this cause harm to our most vulnerable children, or does it help them?
- Read and teach others about Africa
- Read and teach others about our own history as a community

Recommended Reading:

- *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington,
- *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois*
- *The Souls of Black Folk* (W.E.B. DuBois)
- Here's a list from the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Equity and Community Engagement: #EdEquityVA
<https://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/what-we-are-reading/>

Additional Resources:

- Virginia African American History Education Commission:
<https://www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/aahec/>
- We Need Diverse Books: <https://diversebooks.org/>
- Southern Poverty Law Center—Whose Heritage?
<https://www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>
- Project Implicit: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- VCU Becoming an Antiracist Educator: <https://soe.vcu.edu/community/office-of-strategic-engagement/becoming-an-antiracist-educator/>
- Virginia is for Learners: <https://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/edequityva/>

Relevant Community Events:

- Mill Mountain Theatre's Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical. This free filmed musical is based on the Little Rock Nine and is available through October 6:
<https://www.broadwayondemand.com/series/oWetXf58T2cx-polkadots-the-cool-kids-musical--mill-mountain-theatre>
- October 13: Roanoke County Public Library hosts Larry Palmer, author of *Scholarship Boy*.: <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=261>