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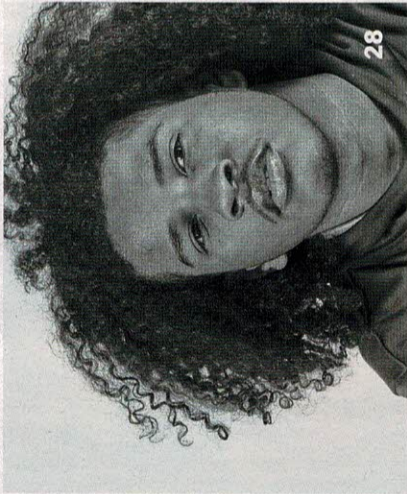
October 2019

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2

COVER

## The Cancer of Institutionalized Racism

**28** Do we care about children? Do we care about justice, equity, and opportunity? Then we need to talk about racism in our schools. Because we're failing—not as individuals, this is not about what we think or hold in our hearts—but as a society that operates within inherently racist systems.



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## Advocating for Racial Equity in our Schools

**20** Facing Inequities and Racism in Education, developed by Education Minnesota, leads and organizes Minnesota educators in a movement to live equitably and practice recognizing and responding to racial inequities and injustices.

## A Racist Incident Happens at School. What now?

**30** As racist incidents and hate crimes occur more frequently on U.S. campuses, educators are well-acquainted with the playbook of immediate responses. But in Dover, N.H., after a video of students singing about the Ku Klux Klan went viral, educators and community members are digging deeper into issues of race and bias.

## Coach, Mentor, Role Model, and Disciplinarian

**34** Teachers of color are asked to fill many roles. Could their colleagues learn to share some of the load?

## Teachers Tell How They Took on the Civics Gap

**38** Low-income students of color often get the least rigorous civics education, missing important lessons on accessing the levers of government and power. Here's how some educators are closing that gap and helping students make a difference in their communities.

## Read Across America Rebrand

**42** NEA's popular reading program has expanded with an interactive calendar for the entire school year featuring books for all ages that reflect the diversity of our students.

## A Profile in Persistence

**46** A paraeducator from central Texas can't afford to pay her bills. She is fighting for a living wage for herself and fellow ESPs, and she won't give up until they win the dignity and respect they deserve.

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COVER: MOSES MITCHELL; ALVAREZ. PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: MOSES MITCHELL; ACKERMAN + GRUBER; NEA READ ACROSS AMERICA CALENDAR; COURTESY OF JOSE FLORES

## TALK BACK

### Empathy and Common Sense

I really enjoyed this. ("Inside a Trauma-Informed Classroom") Districts say they need educators who are up on the "latest" but when you try and incorporate these sorts of things in your classroom, you are not following the "curriculum." I wonder if some eager administrators have lost their common sense when it comes to teachers' intuition. This past year, I know of at least one instance where students were made to take important standardized tests the day after a student from their neighborhood was killed in a gang related shooting. Empathy and good sense, I believe, has gone out of the window. —J. HANNIGAN

### Students Hurting Educators

It's a multifaceted problem. ("When Work Hurts") But one factor is that the current curriculum is not age appropriate, leading to frustration that starts in kindergarten and builds with time. Ask any elementary teacher. Kids are forced to sit too long, have less recess and read and do math when their brains aren't fully developed. Add to it that for the first time in history, all kids are expected to eventually pass Algebra 2 and state tests that are two-five years more difficult than those in previous generations. That's a lot of pressure. —R. BECKLEY

Threatening and intimidating behavior from parents toward teachers should also be a concern that is addressed. At my school, one of our new teachers was verbally threatened, and I personally received harassing texts from a parent who was upset his student-athlete was not passing my class. —LISA



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## SPECIAL SECTIONS

### First and Foremost

**10** Experienced teachers key to helping students succeed. Immersion programs teach more than another language. The growing gap in mental health treatment. The challenge of homework with no internet access. And whether the goal of school is to prepare students for academics or for work.

### Issues and Impact

**14** A federal loan forgiveness program is failing educators and—surprise—Betsy DeVos doesn't care. And how to be brave and start political conversations.

### People and Places

**18** Meet Winter Marshall-Allen, NEA's Social Justice Activist of the Year, and a Wisconsin art teacher who paints with purpose.

### Teaching and Learning

**24** How to engage parents as a way to engage students, and technology tools for specials.

## DEPARTMENTS

**7** A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF In this special-focus issue of *NEA Today*, we're talking about race. We explore how we talk about it, why we need to talk about it, and how to respond to racist incidents that occur on our campuses. The discussion is long overdue.

**8** LILY'S BLACKBOARD It's October. Putting aside the tricks of zombies and monsters—and D.C. politics—let's focus on treats, and especially let's focus on treats for the new teachers and education support professionals in our schools.

**22** HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE Tips for self-care.

**53** RESOURCES

**56** EXTRA CREDIT Structural racism, making the connection.

PHOTO: KIMBERLY DAVIS

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