

# Center of the American Experiment and Educated Teachers MN

**Don't be fooled. The Center of the American Experiment, its secretive funders and its allies don't care about workers, public education or advancing equity in our communities.**

CAE disguises itself as a think tank, but in reality is part of a well-coordinated, corporate-funded, multi-state attack on unions and working families. This Minnesota organization promotes school privatization and dismantling public pensions and vehemently opposes programs that protect the LGBTQ+ community or advocate for people of color.

The Center of the American Experiment manufactures outrage to divide us, particularly along racial lines. Their paid promoters use fear and lies to erode faith in our public schools and to get Minnesota educators to drop their union membership. CAE and its front group only care about education around September of each year when members can revoke their union dues. They unsuccessfully send educators up to a dozen misleading mailings about their union each year.

They don't want us to come together to fight for quality public schools, strong communities, racial justice or better pay and working conditions. Here's where CAE really stands on issues that are important to educators and working families.

## School privatization and vouchers

The center loves to bash public education and advocate for school privatization and vouchers.

When asked by conservative radio host Michael Patrick Leahy on Jan. 19 about what's happening to public education in Minnesota, Center of the American Experiment President John Hinderaker said this:

"In Minnesota, there's been I think some delusional thinking about the quality of our public schools," Hinderaker said on the Tennessee Star Report. He went on, surmising school shutdowns caused by COVID-19 will hopefully drive Minnesotans out of public schools into charter and private schools and have them understand "the baleful role of the teachers union, which is the main driver of lousy public education."

## Immigration and racial justice

CAE consistently tries to blame new immigrants and people of color for our hard times and uses race to divide and distract us.

The latest example is CAE engineering hysteria over what is being taught in our schools, trying to block students from learning our hard truths and to understand and respect people regardless of what they look like or who they love.

Katherine Kersten, a senior policy fellow with the Center of the American Experiment, routinely uses race to play on white fears about public education. In a Feb. 7 Star Tribune opinion piece, she warned parents their children "will be programmed to become the next generation of 'woke' social activists, having spent their public school years immersed in the lingo of the progressive left" if they have an honest look at our history.


Usually the group uses subtle dog whistles, but sometimes the unvarnished truth comes out. Kim Crockett, CAE's former vice president and general counsel, made racist remarks about Somali-American refugees in a June 20, 2019, New York Times article.

"I think of America, the great assimilator, as a rubber band, but with this — we're at the breaking point," Ms. Crockett said. "These aren't people coming from Norway, let's put it that way. These people are very visible."

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**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

## Unions and working families

CAE has a long track record of attacking public employees, their unions and the benefits they earn.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, CAE continued to beat up on public pensions and encourage the state to break promises made to public employees by pushing for defined contribution plans. That means less money for educators when they retire. They also railed against additional unemployment benefits to help working families during this economic crisis.

The center also brings in and touts anti-union speakers for events. Rebecca Friedrichs, a former California public school teacher who sued her union over the collection of fair-share fees, was a featured speaker at a high-profile event in 2018.

Friedrichs wrote an op-ed in the Washington Times accusing U.S. public schools of grooming children to be sexualized.

"If we as a society are so disturbed by the actions of Epstein, Miss Maxwell and an untold number of others," Friedrichs wrote in July 15 opinion piece, referring to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his criminally charged former partner Ghislaine Maxwell, "then why are we allowing America's public schools to groom our children to be sexualized?"

The center and its subsidiaries deliberately distract us with fearmongering to protect the richest few who write the rules against us. But Minnesotans are better than that. No matter what we look like or where we come from, we can come together to rewrite the rules, make the rich pay their fair share and ensure every one of us can care for our families, earn a fair return for our work and do right by the people who protect us.