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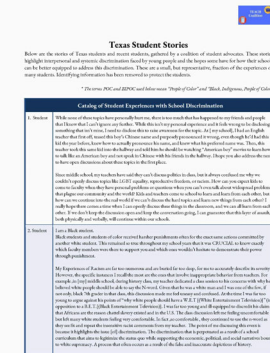
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Students Tell Texas Attorney General that Racial Discrimination in School is Real

IDRA Applauds Students Speaking Out Against Texas' New Classroom Censorship Law

(San Antonio • September 29, 2021) Concerned about the impact of the new classroom censorship bill in Texas, [88 public school students described their experiences of racial discrimination in school](#). In response to a state representative's [request](#) for a Texas Attorney General opinion on 'antiracism' teachings and Critical Race Theory (CRT) principles in Texas public schools," the TEACH Coalition submitted a letter urging the Attorney General Ken Paxton to decline to issue an opinion. The TEACH Coalition, a collective of Texas students, parents and educators, sent the Attorney General the student-led collection of instances of racial and gender discrimination in Texas public schools.



“When the Texas legislature passed laws this year censoring classroom discussion and whitewashing history, students heard policymakers deny that systemic racism or sexism even exists in schools,” IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno said.

“Silencing student speech about systemic racism in the world around them, including in their schools and state legislatures, will only serve to perpetuate that racism.”

Examples of the students’ experiences are as follows:



“My fourth grade teacher had me (a Latinx girl) and a Black boy stand up in front of the whole class while she pretended to be a slave auctioneer. She called my Black classmate a strong boy who could work in the fields for yours while holding his arm up to make it look like he was flexing for the class. She called me a sweet little girl that would be good for housework while tugging at my braids. I think she wanted to illustrate how auctioning off enslaved people looked like, but the manner she did it was problematic and made me uncomfortable. I can’t imagine how the boy felt. The fact that she is a white woman made me even more uncomfortable.”



“I had an English teacher that, first off, teased this boy’s Chinese name and purposely pronounced it wrong, even though he’d had this kid the year before, knew how to actually pronounce his name, and knew what his preferred name was. Then, this teacher took this same kid into the hallway and told him he should be watching ‘American boy’ movies to learn how to talk like an American boy and not speak in Chinese with his friends in the hallway.”



“One white history teacher called me a ‘f*cking terrorist’ in the middle of class then proceeded to say she felt ‘unsafe’ with me in the classroom. All I did was be born with brown skin. I’m not even an immigrant, I was born in the U.S.”



“There is a deep disrespect in many students towards black women. It creates a hostile environment for all black women at [my high school], especially the students. There was a white boy who replied to a girl’s Snapchat post regarding starting a Black student union and said something along the lines of ‘Maybe I should start the Kool Kids Klub.’”



“I remember in elementary school, around Thanksgiving time, each class either dressed as a pilgrim or a Native American. Those who dressed as Native Americans wore face paint, brown paper shirts with designs on them, and fake feather headdresses. I understood why we celebrated Thanksgiving but not the reason for dressing up that way.”

“IDRA applauds the TEACH Coalition for doing what all education advocates and lawmakers must do more of: amplify and center student voices in decisions that most impact them,” Moreno said. “These students’ bravery drawing attention to the actual harm they face is in stark

contrast to Texas lawmakers who push myths and instill fear for their own political gain.”

These stories show why diversity, equity and inclusion training are needed for teachers across Texas public schools and why Texas students need culturally-sustaining schools. The [IDRA EAC-South](#) provides training and resources on culturally-sustaining schools and diversity, equity and inclusion.

See the TEACH Coalition's press release

See the TEACH Coalition Statement: Parents Against Texas House Bill 3979 and Senate Bill 3

Educators! Tell us how classroom censorship policies and proposals are affecting your school!

Fill out our educator survey

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

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