



A Stunning Pushback Against Critical Race Theory in Schools

By [Maurine Proctor](#) · June 10, 2021

Something happened while we weren't looking. Under the guise of compassion for people of color who have been marginalized, the critical race theory ideology has swept in a surprising tidal wave across entertainment, media, higher education, government, sports, and corporations in America—and now it is coming for K-12 schools to make the indoctrination complete.

Critical race theory (CRT) reframes American history and institutions to be hateful, and therefore, in need of deconstruction. White males created Western civilization to maintain privilege. CRT sees the world through a lens as if history is only the oppressed versus the oppressor. Its ideology demands compliance and shuts free speech. Say the wrong thing or take a viewpoint contrary to the ideology and you will be shamed and punished with loss of career, status, income or reputation. It is the author of the infamous cancel culture.

What most Americans, caught up in busy lives, don't see is how subtly this ideology is being brought into their schools, sometimes under another name, but the values are the same. Though we may think it is next to impossible to stop this flood into our schools, the story we tell here shows just what a community can do.

Hannah Smith, who moved to Southlake, Texas, only two years ago, had no idea at the time that she would become a leader in her community as the citizens joined together against the

introduction of CRT in her local schools. Yet, she was particularly equipped for it. This mother of four had been a law clerk to two U.S. Supreme Court Justices, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito, and she had spent a decade working for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, where she had contributed to over 25 briefs at the US Supreme Court, representing diverse religious groups across the nation. She had also been a fellow at the International Center for Law and Religious Studies at BYU.

Like most families in the area, the Smiths had moved to Southlake for the award-winning excellence of the schools, but in August of 2020, when as few people were in town as possible, at the local school board meeting, a 34-page Cultural Competence Action Plan (CCAP) was presented that was designed to reshape the district in profound ways based on the CRT ideology. It was something the school board may have believed they could pass quickly, but the citizens became aware of it and rallied.

Hannah said, “No one is against diversity. No one is against inclusion. No one is against our students learning about other cultures. No one believes that any group should suffer oppression or discrimination or harassment or any form of bullying. We want our kids to be safe in schools. We want our kids to be able to learn in a safe environment. That’s not the issue. The issue is about accepting a plan that is based on a radical, neo-Marxist ideology that would pit our students against each other based on their skin color and we just had to stop that.

“If the CCAP were a plan about basic human decency and kindness and teaching our children to be respectful, then I would be all for it, but that’s not really what it is all about. The tactic is to try to describe these plans as just innocent attempts to teach kids to better understand each other and how to get along, but I actually think the CCAP was the exact opposite. It would divide our students and pit them against each other based on their skin color. It makes them afraid of each other.

“That’s one of the things I said when I went to present public comments. The CCAP will actually prevent students from learning more about each other because they will be so scared that what they say will be offensive and they will be punished for their innocent attempts to understand their classmates better that they would just stop talking to each other. That is really a tragedy. If you are trying to help students understand each other’s differences better, then you can’t adopt a program that would actually have the exact opposite effect.

“This isn’t about people understanding different cultures. I’m all for helping people understand different cultures, but really what this Cultural Competence Action Plan was would infringe upon free speech, due process and freedom of association and a whole host of other constitutional and federal legal protections that would have just been completely undermined.”

Microaggressions and Monitoring Student Speech

Hannah was worried about so many aspects of the plan, including the monitoring of the children’s speech. She said, “The CCAP plan wanted to introduce microaggression tracking and punishing of the students at school. Microaggressions were defined as intentional or unintentional offenses that were basically defined in the eye of the beholder. Subjective things

like asking somebody where they are from could be a microaggression, because it suggests that they are not American. Or asking someone, “What is that food you are eating?” at lunchtime, could be a microaggression, because it could be offensive to the student who had the ethnic lunch.

She said, “You could easily see a child or student just being genuinely curious, and yet they would be written up for having microaggressed another student.”

Equity Audits

She was also concerned about the equity audits built into the plan. For Americans, equality is a banner concept which means that all citizens should have equal protection under the law. It seeks to provide equality of opportunity. Equity, however, means something different. Ibram X. Kendi, the chief purveyor of the concept of racial equity said that the chief indicator two races are on unequal footing can be found not in proof of differential treatment by race, but in proof of differential outcome by race.

Hannah said the CCAP proposal “wanted to do equity audits of the entire curriculum and all of the districts’ policies and procedures and they wanted to audit student clubs on campus, so if you had a student club that was a religious club, then they would audit your club to see if your beliefs were ‘culturally competent’. If they weren’t deemed so, then you probably wouldn’t be able to have your student club meet on campus.

“A Neo-Marxist ideology is by definition going to be hostile toward religion and particularly when you are talking about imposing a culturally competent view of the world on to student groups that have their own particular doctrine or particular religious beliefs.”

She said, “Student clubs were a real concern, because as we’ve seen at universities in the last 10 years, when colleges go down this path of evaluating religious student groups as to whether their doctrine is sufficiently woke, it always results with these groups getting kicked off campus. This plan is about bringing it into K-12. Here in Texas, we have a robust policy where different religious groups can sponsor student groups on campus such as Christian Student Athletes or a Catholic Bible study group. I’m concerned that those student groups would be discriminated against.”

In addition, she said, “If you look at places around the country like Boston and Seattle and Chicago where equity audits have led to the eradication of gifted and talented programs, that’s a great concern. Instead of looking as to what are the root causes as to why particular segments of our student population, in particular Hispanics and African Americans, are not qualifying for those programs at the same rates as Caucasian or Asian students, instead of focusing on how we can remedy that, many of the school systems across the country are just getting rid of gifted and talented programs altogether, and that’s a real cause for concern.

“We don’t want our education to be fundamentally altered so that high performing kids can’t get the level of education that they need to succeed. We need to bring everybody along at their own pace, but there are school districts that are piloting programs to collapse on level courses and

honor courses together and getting rid of those advance tracks in the name of equity. We should think long and hard about what that is going to mean for the future of American education and also the future of our work force.

She said, “There are companies that do these equity audits, reviewing the entire curriculum through the lens of race and equity. They are essentially making sure the curriculum is sufficiently woke. These equity audits would include changing the kinds of books that kids read from the classic western civilization canon to other books.”

It is not just goodbye to Shakespeare, but also certain books are specifically picked out to be eliminated. Goodbye to *To Kill a Mockingbird* because it uses an offensive word, even though it is one of the most important books to read to understand discrimination.

She said, “What’s interesting about these equity audits, is that they don’t differ from school to school. They give the same recommendations across the board and you can predict what they will do. It isn’t really clear why we would have to pay upward of \$50 thousand for this service.

Why should we have someone from Boston or San Francisco to come in and revamp our curriculum when we have parents right here in Texas who should say what their kids should be learning in their schools?”

American History Reframed

She said, “The whole lens through which they view American history is to say that white oppressors have oppressed non-white populations and that is the whole basis for critical race theory. You look at everything in society from the viewpoint of who are the oppressors and who are the oppressed, and that is how you understand every institution whether it be government, religion or civil society. That’s how you understand why things have happened the way they have.” Since oppressors—conscious or unconscious—are fundamentally evil, punishment should follow. It is also the reason why the CRT activists think institutions must be broken to their foundation and reformed.

Hannah said, “My biggest concern is that our students understand the unique position that America holds in the world and I think CRT attempts to reframe the next generations’ understanding of America’s greatness by recasting it in terms of white oppression. I want my four kids to be taught that while America isn’t perfect, it is the greatest country on earth and we have to teach our kids American history, warts and all, but not from a perspective that America is the cause the oppression of different peoples. I hope that we can really teach our kids an accurate history of our history so that they love America, so that they understand America’s greatness and that CRT would fundamentally alter our kids’ education in a way that would do great damage to that.”

Free Speech

Free speech, which not only allows multiple views, but respects and encourages them, is not embraced in CRT. Instead, there is an absolute insistence on only one ideologically correct point of view.

She said, “The idea that you have rational debate, and you see all sides of the issue is not valued in that kind of an environment, and that people would be able to present alternative viewpoints, which is the foundation of what we have long understood to be academic freedom in the American system, is no longer acceptable.

Troubling Teacher Training

Teacher training provisions were also troubling, according to Hannah. “They wanted to do invasive trainings based on critical race theory.” Hannah and the community group were able to get slide decks to see firsthand how the teachers were being trained. They were completely infused with CRT ideology.

“For example,” she said, “We had a slide deck from an administrative retreat in 2019 where the executive directors and principals and all of the administrative leadership of our district were trained in white supremacy, white fragility, white identity and intersectionality. One of the slides said, ‘Name characteristics of white culture.’ Some of those characteristics were being on time, working hard, and giving the right answer. To me that is highly offensive to people of color. You are assuming because you are not white you are not hard working, or you are not punctual or you are not able to get the correct answer.”

The teacher development section also included a professional metric so that during their annual review teachers would be subjected to questioning about their “cultural competence” or how clearly they aligned themselves with the CRT ideology, and that would be part of their annual review as to whether they could keep their job. She said, “It’s an essential effort to weed out a particular kind of teacher and make room for another type of teacher.”

Rallying

In response to this genuine threat to their school system, Southlake rallied. Rich Lowry in National Review described it. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/06/how-southlake-texas-won-its-battle-against-critical-race-theory/>

“The Southlake opposition was spontaneous and genuinely grassroots, but not the least bit amateurish. While there’s no substitute for having inflamed public opinion on your side, it has to be appropriately channeled. The Southlake opposition was unified, was carefully organized, and never took its eye off the ball.

“It was also fearless, remaining outspoken and resolute despite harassment and efforts to get its supporters fired by their employers.

“In short, its stupendous victory wasn’t something that just happened.”

The uprising against the CCAP was powerful and smart, and Hannah was right in the middle of it. As word of the plan got out, a petition circulated that grew quickly to 2600 signatures, a significant number in a town of 32,000.

A Facebook group called South Lake Conservative Values emerged. Some, including Hannah, began to submit open records requests so the activities of the district could be transparent, and that's how they learned how the teacher training had changed.

In another open record request, they got access to texts between board members and learned that they had been deliberating together on these issues which is a violation of the Texas Open Meetings Act. A PAC was formed to pay for litigation, and for now, at least, the CCAP is on hold.

Because she had been involved in religious freedom legal cases for so long, Hannah reached out to colleagues from around the nation that were working to stop the spread of Critical Race Theory in the schools. In this time of COVID, they held online webinars for members of the community to educate them about CRT which sounds so benevolent on the surface.

Finally, the time came in January 2021 to file to run for the school board and the Southlake Families Pac gave a blessing to two candidates, one of whom was Hannah. She had 70 meet and greets to know the citizens and present her case. They hosted lunches and get togethers so people would know these two candidates better. They got endorsements both local and far beyond. People were concerned that if these two candidates didn't win, they would see the deterioration of their schools, that it would deeply damage their children, and that even their property values would be hit.

"There were so many amazing people that worked together on this. We had quite a team. I feel like we were brought together for this purpose," Hannah said.

People started to say, "If this passes, we're leaving. If we don't get our people elected, we're out of here. Everybody knew there was a lot at stake."

Hannah Smith did win the school board election and was sworn in in May. She was acritical to pushing back against the implementation of Critical Race Theory in her children's schools. She also has an important message.

You have to watch what is happening in your local district. Hannah said, "We were fortunate because this CCAP proposal was offered all at once, so we could see what is happening, but often CRT is implemented piecemeal and it happens when people don't know it is happening.

"Parents should understand that they are not alone. I've talked to so many people across the country and they feel isolated. They feel like they are battling this all by themselves, and they need to understand that there are people all over the country like them who are trying to fight CRT in their kids' schools. They need to band together with other like-minded parents, and they can effectuate real change and they can win this battle against critical race theory. It just takes some organization and some collaboration within their communities."

The battle is local and that is where concerned parents can triumph. For those who want to know more, she recommends a number of organizations who can give parents tools and knowledge to stand against CRT in their own communities. These include:

Parents Defending Education: <https://defendinged.org/> They have resources on their website. They are well-funded and funding litigation against Critical Race Theory across the county. This group also features what they call an Indoctrination map that shows the status of different states with respect to CRT. <https://defendinged.org/map/#Alpine%20School%20District>

The Center for Renewing America: <https://citizensrenewingamerica.com/issues/combating-critical-race-theory-in-your-community/> has a tool kit and a “Combating Critical Race Theory in Your Community: An A to Z Guide on How to Stop Critical Race Theory and Reclaim Your Local School Board.” They also have model resolutions for school boards to adopt to stop CRT in their district. They also have a valuable reading list to understand CRT better.

Parents Know Best: <https://parentsknowbest.com/> Excellent resources on their website.

Ethics and Public Policy Center: <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/new-tool-for-states-to-block-action-civics-and-crt/> Stanley Kurtz, a senior fellow of the EPPC has created model state-level legislation.

The Heritage Foundation: <https://www.heritage.org/search?contains=critical+race+theory> This has an excellent section on CRT and also offers some model legislation.

No Left Turn in Education: <https://noleftturn.us/about-us/>

If you need help from Hannah Smith to get started in your own community, she can be reached at hannahsmith4cisd@gmail.com

Stopping critical race theory from infiltrating our schools and indoctrinating our children is a battle worth fighting. This isn't the time to sit back and hope that somebody else will fight this battle.