**Free Write Directions**

Read the following article excerpt and use the knowledge you gained from the stations to write about the perpetuation of the limitation of Black representation in school.

New laws steer some teachers away from race-related topics

*New measures that restrict how race is addressed in classrooms have spread confusion and anxiety among many educators*

By**TRAVIS LOLLER and ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press**

November 18, 2021, 11:37 AM

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- New measures that restrict how race is addressed in classrooms have spread confusion and anxiety among many educators, who in some cases have begun pulling books and canceling lessons for fear of being penalized.

Education officials have nixed a contemporary issues class in a Tennessee district, removed Frederick Douglass’ autobiography from reading lists in an Oklahoma school system and, in one Texas case, advised teachers to present “opposing” views of the Holocaust.

At least a dozen states have passed measures this year restricting how schools teach about racism, sexism and other topics. While educators are still waiting to see how they will be enforced, the vagueness of some of the measures, coupled with stiff penalties including potential loss of teaching licenses, already are chilling conversations on race in schools and, in some cases, having consequences that likely go well beyond the intent of those approving the measures.

Matt Hawn, a high school social studies teacher in Tennessee, said he has heard from teachers concerned about how they will teach controversial topics since he was fired himself this spring as state lawmakers were finalizing new teaching restrictions.

“It’s certainly giving them caution, like, ‘What’s going to happen if I teach this?’ — because the penalty is so steep,’” Hawn said.

Hawn was dismissed after school officials said he used materials with offensive language and failed to provide a conservative viewpoint during discussions of white privilege in his contemporary issues class, which has since been eliminated.

Teaching around race and diversity has been on the rise alongside a broader acknowledgment that racial injustice didn’t end in America with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Those efforts have spurred a backlash, particularly among Republican voters.

In Virginia, Republican Glenn Youngkin won the governor’s race this month promising to ban critical race theory, a term has become a stand-in for concepts like systemic racism and implicit bias. His Democratic opponent faced criticism for saying parents shouldn't tell schools what to teach.

Some sections of the new laws would seem unobjectionable. Tennessee’s law bars the teaching that one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex. But other sections are more murky, barring teaching that promotes division or causes children to feel psychological distress because of their race or sex.

Those vague prohibitions have left teachers worried that any instruction on difficult topics like slavery or contemporary racism could be construed by parents as violating the law, said Alice O’Brien, general counsel for the National Education Association.

“These measures are problematic because it is unclear what they mean and very much in the eye of the beholder,” O’Brien said. “I think it is worth understanding that every state already has pretty comprehensive rules in place for K-12 about what teachers have to teach. And they’re required to teach the whole history of the United States ... not just the parts that we can feel celebratory about.”