

Wealthy Minnesota School District Treating Its Students Like Racists

In May, I [reported on](#) the controversial social justice curriculum being taught to young students in [Edina Public Schools](#)—a wealthy suburban district in Minnesota considered to be among the state’s best.

At Edina’s [Highlands Elementary](#) this past year, students—even kindergartners and first-graders—were made to participate in a number of projects designed to teach them about their racial privilege and encourage them to become activists.

I had my suspicions why a school district would deem it necessary to subject kindergartners to such a curriculum, and to teach them to view the world primarily through the lens of race.

architect of the program in the district. Basically, he assumes that these young students may already be racists.

In an email to me, Mr. Seaman asked “Why do you object to teaching social justice in all classrooms?” and then wrote “I’ve linked an article for your perusal regarding the early onset of racial bias.”

The article he linked to was authored by Andrew Grant-Thomas—co-founder of [EmbraceRace](#)—and titled [“Your 5-year-old is already racially biased. Here’s what you can do about it.”](#)

Grant-Thomas attempts to disavow the common assumption (which, admittedly, is also my own) that schools do not need to teach young children to identify their “racial biases”:

“Such sentiments are familiar?—and deeply misguided. In the United States, a lot of us believe that children, especially

White children, are racial innocents?—?completely naive, curiously fragile with respect to the realities of race, or both. The truth is that well before their teen years, the vast majority of children are well aware of prevailing biases, and most kids, of all racial stripes, have taken on a bunch of their own.

Researchers have been studying the development of racial and ethnic biases in children for a long time, and we know quite a bit. We know that within a few months of birth, [babies prefer own-race faces](#), probably because most are surrounded by [people who look like them](#). Sometime during the preschool years, however, this relatively innocent pull toward the familiar morphs into something else.

[By age five](#), Black and Hispanic children show no preference toward their own group compared to Whites. On the other hand, White kids remain strongly biased in favor of whiteness. [By the start of kindergarten](#), ‘children begin to show many of the same implicit racial attitudes that adults in our culture hold. Children have already learned to associate some groups with higher status, or more positive value, than others.’

... [T]he crucial question isn’t ‘Why bring issues of racial, ethnic, religious and other kinds of bias into our schools?’ It’s ‘how do we constructively engage the harmful biases we know pervade our schools and just about everywhere else? And what can we do to shape our children’s racial attitudes before and as they emerge?’”

Recently, [a series of articles](#) published by the [Center of the American Experiment](#) have shown that this assumption of students’ inherent racial bias pervades the entire Edina school district, and [many other suburban districts around the Twin Cities](#). As one of the parents of an Edina High School student wrote:

“We’re tired of them trying to indoctrinate our children to

believe what they believe rather than teaching critical thinking and actual course work. We're tired of our kids coming home feeling defeated because their beliefs are forbidden at school and they will be ostracized if they speak out. We're tired of our kids telling us that all they hear in LA [Language Arts] and other classes is that white people, especially white men, are bad, over and over. We're absolutely sickened when our son tells us that he is labeled a racist, sexist and rapist—yes, a RAPIST—because he is a white male.”

In addition, the Edina district's staff are required to attend training geared to making them aware of their own racial biases. According to a former bus driver for the district:

“I worked for Edina for almost 13 years driving a school bus. We were forced to attend ‘Equity’ classes that basically were excoriating us for our white privilege. I had some wonderful times driving but the indoctrination was more than ridiculous.”

As many of you have discovered, it's difficult to argue against this perception that all white people have ingrained racism and privilege. That's because [it's reached the level of religious dogma](#)—something that you can't necessarily see, nor fully understand, but must nevertheless profess belief in.

One can find an instance of the dogmatic character achieved by this narrative of inherent racial bias in the closing words of Mr. Seaman's email to me:

*“What a bummer it must be to live in constant fear. I cannot imagine what it is like to be threatened by **the truth**, and that truth ubiquitously surrounds you, even though it does not match your own ideology... I hope you can see the sunshine today.”*