



## Silencing Teachers is Not the Answer

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After a long day of work, where work is not bringing a person joy, that person may lament about work on social media. Sometimes those people are teachers. I have been one of those teachers, and I am known to still pop off online today. Some of my employers did not care, but others did. The ones who did were the ones with the real problem.

A school district in Texas has updated its contract to muzzle teachers. The updated contract states that teachers should not “disparage, criticize, or defame the District.” If a district is not doing anything wrong, the district should not feel the need to try and control what educators say about the district. If the school district was so great, then teachers would be the first ones to highlight and praise the district.

Teacher retention is already an issue and contract language like this will not help. School district leaders need to get out of their feelings and listen to teachers instead of trying to silence them. Any person that goes online to vent about a job knows there are risks whether or not speaking out against the employer is in the contract. For teachers to take this risk, it means the issue outweighs the risk.

There are too many school districts that are doing harm to staff and students for educators to remain silent. As a parent, I would not want my children attending a school district where teachers did not feel they could speak up. I consider my children’s teachers as a partner to helping my children learn, so I want my children’s teachers to feel free to speak up about issues especially when students are impacted.

It is easier to add a clause to a contract than to resolve the issues that teachers have complained about. School district leaders who go this route are not leaders. They are cowards hiding behind contracts instead of being humble enough to take feedback.