

**Police Violence**  
Staying silent hurts students

**Dismantling Brown**  
Know the history of school segregation

**Second-Shift Students**  
When school's just one of many jobs

# TEACHING TOLERANCE



ISSUE 54 | FALL 2016  
TOLERANCE.ORG

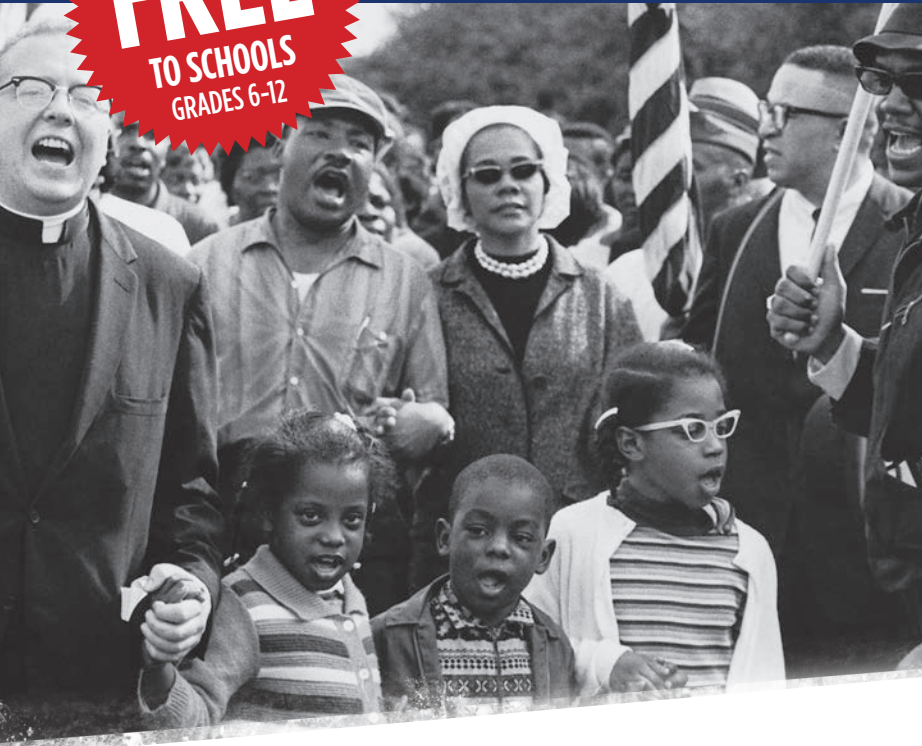


***Teach the  
2016 Election!***

STORIES, INTERVIEWS AND TEACHER-TESTED TIPS  
TO HELP YOU CUT THROUGH THE RHETORIC  
AND ENGAGE YOUNG CITIZENS.

**FREE**  
TO SCHOOLS  
GRADES 6-12

A NEW FILM KIT AND TEACHER'S GUIDE



# SELMA THE BRIDGE TO THE BAL

Discover the Role Educators and Students Played in Securing the Right to Vote



# FROM TEACHING TOLERANCE



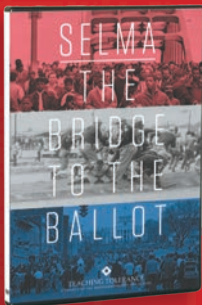
# BALLOT

On March 7, 1965, 600 civil rights activists gathered in Selma, Alabama, and attempted a journey to the state capitol, marching for dignity and equality.

- 18 days • 54 miles • 1 police attack
- 1,900 National Guard troops • 2,000 U.S. Army soldiers

and countless stories later ...  
... they arrived in Montgomery — and changed history.

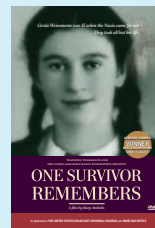
The Selma-to-Montgomery legacy includes the sacrifices of young people whose history is seldom told. Share their stories with your students.



You can order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* at [tolerance.org/teaching-kits/order](http://tolerance.org/teaching-kits/order)

Recommended for grades six and up.

**BRING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO YOUR CLASSROOM.**  
TRY OUR OTHER FILM KITS



### ONE SURVIVOR REMEMBERS

Gerda Weissmann Klein's account of surviving the Holocaust encourages thoughtful classroom discussion about a difficult-to-teach topic.

Grades 6-12

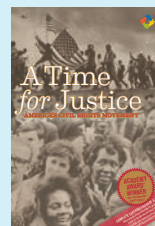
STREAMING ONLINE



### VIVA LA CAUSA

An introduction to lessons about struggles for workers' rights—both past and present.

Grades 6-12



### A TIME FOR JUSTICE

Follow the civil rights movement from Emmett Till to the passing of the Voting Rights Act.

Grades 6-12

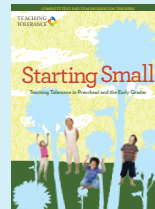


MIGHTY TIMES

### THE CHILDREN'S MARCH

The heroic story of the young people in Birmingham, Ala., who brought segregation to its knees.

Grades 6-12



### STARTING SMALL

A tool for early-grades educators creating classrooms in which peace, equity and justice are guiding themes.

Professional Development



### BULLIED

A Student, a School and a Case that Made History

One student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies culminates in a message of hope.

Grades 6-12

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# TEACHING TOLERANCE

ISSUE 54 | FALL 2016

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### on the cover

*Our Fall issue can get you ready for the 2016 presidential election, regardless of your role or the age of your students.*

ILLUSTRATION BY **NIGEL BUCHANAN**



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE  
*The new Smithsonian museum offers something for everyone—whether you can travel to D.C. or not!!*

**LOOK INSIDE! ▶**  
Our new Mix It Up posters are a blast from the past!



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[tolerance.org/ttab-election](http://tolerance.org/ttab-election)



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# SPEAK UP FOR CIVILITY

With Our Election 2016 Contract



Let's agree to model  
good citizenship in our  
school communities,  
even when we don't see  
eye to eye.

- ▶ Download the Speak Up for Civility contract.
- ▶ Share with colleagues, parents and students.
- ▶ Sign the contract together.
- ▶ Teach the election.
- ▶ Encourage respectful conversations.

SHOW ALL STUDENTS  
HOW A DEMOCRACY  
SHOULD WORK!

[TOLERANCE.ORG/CIVILITY](http://TOLERANCE.ORG/CIVILITY)



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*Teaching Tolerance* is mailed twice and released online three times a year at no charge to educators. It is published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal and education organization. For permission to reprint articles, email us at [editor@tolerance.org](mailto:editor@tolerance.org). For media inquiries, email Ashley Levett at [ashley.levett@splcenter.org](mailto:ashley.levett@splcenter.org).

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## Perspectives

*“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.”*

— NEIL POSTMAN

*“Political civility is not about being polite to each other. It’s about reclaiming the power of ‘We the People’ to come together, debate the common good and call American democracy back to its highest values amid our differences.”*

— PARKER J. PALMER



**AS THE 2016** campaign season ramped up this August, a number of journalists wrote about a new dilemma: how to maintain objectivity (one of the foundations of the profession) in the face of a presidential candidacy that is, to put it bluntly, not “normal.” ¶ It’s a question teachers have been agonizing over, too, according to the survey we conducted last spring. Teachers are asking, “How can we maintain the standards of our profession without normalizing the

rejecting a claim. By routinely asking the basic questions, “How do you know this?” and “What evidence supports this claim?” teachers will be able to keep the class from going off the rails.

One thing I would not do is allow my classroom to become a forum for debating issues that aren’t worthy of debate. A candidate says something outrageous and responds that it was “just a joke.” The classroom discussion that follows shouldn’t be about whether it was a joke or not, but about how sarcasm conflicts with a candidate’s obligation to be transparent. Both candidates have claimed that the other doesn’t have the “temperament” to be president. Rather than debate those statements, I’d ask students what kind of temperament our shared values call for.

I know I’d be struggling if I were still in the classroom, but I hope I’d concentrate fiercely on this truth: My job, as an educator, is to prepare future citizens so the next generation can carry on in that “time we will not see,” to model citizenship and to “call American democracy back to its highest values.”

So the question that each of us must answer is, “What does this election require of me as a citizen?”

—Maureen Costello

behavior and language on display in this presidential campaign?”

It’s a very real quandary. Because I’m no longer in the classroom, I’ve hesitated to dole out advice. And if this were a normal election year, I would remain silent—but this is not a normal election year.

If I were teaching today, I’d begin the year by discussing basic democratic values, sometimes called the “American creed”:

- Government derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed.
- Government exists to promote the common good.
- Individuals are entitled to political equality.
- People must follow the rule of law, with no one above the law.
- Majority rules but cannot take away fundamental rights.
- Truth is essential to the “American way.”

These ideas aren’t up for debate; they are part of our founding documents. As a nation, we may disagree about how to realize them, but not about their fundamental truth.

It’s not enough, of course, to name the values; we must unpack them.

“Consent of the governed,” for instance, doesn’t just refer to the vote. People can’t consent to what they don’t know, so politicians have an obligation to be transparent in their dealings, and candidates need to provide details about what they plan to do.

After unpacking these democratic values, I’d push my students to think about their own values and use both as a framework for our discussions of the campaign and the candidates. Together, we’d define a corpus of values and ideas we believe are important for our nation and for the future.

In a typical presidential campaign season, our class would spend a lot of time defining the issues and comparing the candidates’ positions and policies. While that’s still important, this year I’d focus on a key critical-thinking and media-literacy skill: the ability to test claims. With the avalanche of information that threatens to bury us daily, students need tools to figure out whether a source is reliable, what evidence supports a claim, and how to explain their reasons for accepting or



**Speak Up for Civility!** This election season, pledge to put kids first by resisting divisive rhetoric, and encourage your school community to do the same! [tolerance.org/civility](http://tolerance.org/civility).

# SPLC ON CAMPUS//JOIN THE MOVEMENT!



**REGISTER  
SHOW UP  
VOTE 2016**

**Check out our voter  
participation initiative.**

**For more information, visit**

**[SPLCONCAMPUS.ORG](http://SPLCONCAMPUS.ORG)**

## **FIGHT HATE AND STOP BIGOTRY.**

Check out the Southern Poverty Law Center's newest initiative for college students: SPLC on Campus.

Developed to support emerging and existing student activists, SPLC on Campus provides free resources and support to club members.

Do you attend college or work with college students? Start a club today, and advocate for the issues you care about—like voting!



**TEACHING  
TOLERANCE**

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER



# FIRST BELL

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## Reader Reactions

Our student-friendly video, *Intersectionality 101*, made a big splash on social media. Haven't watched it yet? Take a look at [tolerance.org/intersectionality](http://tolerance.org/intersectionality).

@Tolerance\_org this is such a helpful tool to educate kids & adults on the social issues that are all too often ignored, thank you!

—TRACY HUNTER  
VIA TWITTER

Excellent video & incredible talent! (Also very much appreciate the inclusion of people with disabilities!)

—EMILY LANDERS  
VIA FACEBOOK



Looking ahead to the 2016-17 school year—and the election—got many readers thinking and talking!

### CIVIL CIVICS

THANK YOU! I've been feeling a desperate need to figure out how to teach civil discourse to my 7th graders. Today you sent me the very documents and guidelines for how to do it! WOW! Thank you!

—KERRI LORIGAN  
VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: You can access our web package of election-related resources at [tolerance.org/election2016](http://tolerance.org/election2016).*

### LOVE FOR PERSPECTIVES

Extraordinary collection of materials! This [*Perspectives for a Diverse America*] saved hundreds of hours of research and preparation and yields results far beyond what I could have accomplished! Thank you!

—ANONYMOUS  
VIA SURVEY

### LIGHT-BULB MOMENTS

Thank you for the amazing work that you do. I am

so thankful for the support you offer to teachers. I have witnessed students becoming more aware of their history and what is currently going on in our world. These "light-bulb" moments for kids often follow valuable discussions that we have using Teaching Tolerance. Thank you again and keep up the great work.

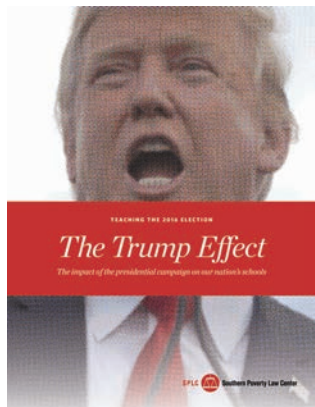
—KIM GEER-MARCHETTI  
VIA EMAIL

**MOVED BY THE TRUMP EFFECT**

That hurt to read. I knew it was a problem, but some of the stories pulled from the findings made me sick.

—CHRIS MILES

VIA FACEBOOK



**NOT TT'S PLACE**

[On *The Trump Effect*] The fact that most teachers are extremely liberal and worried about Trump does not change the fact it is not your job to enter the political arena ... in my humble



Star Ali Mistriel

One of my most favorite resources for the last decade is and has been Teaching Tolerance. ... [T]hey bring up some very important points in how each of us “reflect” and explore our biases: either by looking through a window or by looking in a mirror. Great analogy!

VIA FACEBOOK

opinion. ... Perhaps if you hadn't put a giant picture of Trump on front and been over the top derogatory throughout, then your argument that it was about discourse in a classroom would hold water. It doesn't as long as the picture speaks louder than your words.

—MARCIA WANT

VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: We received an extraordinary number of responses to The Trump Effect. Read how this report affected an entire school district in “If It Can Happen Here...” (page 31).*

**LANGUAGE MATTERS**

If you were really about tolerance you wouldn't be using the term *colorblind*. There's over 300 million people in the world just like me that are colorblind that are looking for information on being colorblind. ... Colorblindness is an abnormality in your eyeball, not a racist point of view.

—MIKE LENNART

VIA EMAIL

**READING BETWEEN THE LINES**

[On “We Can't Dismantle What We Can't See”] Literature aimed at identifying social ills has a short shelf life. I don't feel Golding [in *Lord of the Flies*] was dissecting hyper-masculinity. I would argue he was taking on the perennial struggle between good and evil, right



Michelle Gutierrez @michgutierrez

[On “Anatomy of an Ally”] @Tolerance\_\_org magazine examines how teachers can be effective allies for students. Amazing resource!

and wrong, more specifically culture versus chaos. Because he wrote [about] adolescent boys, they behaved like adolescent boys. I didn't read into it any more than that. I worry that if I make everything I read about a social issue, I'll miss the greater truth about humanity it has to offer.

—CASEY FERGUSON

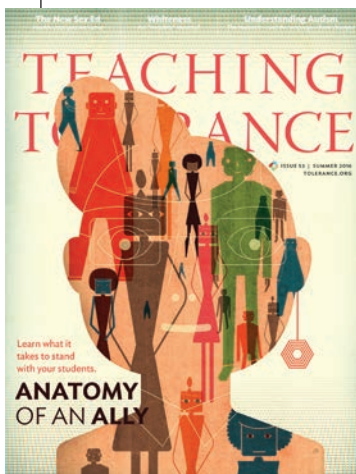
VIA FACEBOOK

shared. Those have been my most powerful class discussions and total class climate builders! Thanks for all you do to make your publications so real for my students (and me too, of course!).

—TAMI LAMERATO

VIA EMAIL

*Editor's note: Do you get our weekly newsletter? Subscribe here: [tolerance.org/newsletter/signup](http://tolerance.org/newsletter/signup).*



**CHANGING LIVES**

*Teaching Tolerance* is something I look forward to receiving in the mail. I cannot even count the number of times I have used your magazine as a classroom resource! It's wonderful and by far my favorite!! Keep up the good work!! You're changing lives!!

—KELLEY HENDRICKS

VIA EMAIL

**FUEL FOR DISCUSSION**

Just a quick note of thanks for all the amazing topics you put out there for educators. I am so thrilled to be on your emailing list. I follow your stories and do discuss and teach topics you've

**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

Have an opinion about something you see in *Teaching Tolerance* magazine or on our website? Email us at [editor@tolerance.org](mailto:editor@tolerance.org) with the subject line “Letter to the Editor.” Or mail a letter to 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104.



**Speak Up for Civility!** This election season, pledge to put kids first by resisting divisive rhetoric, and encourage your school community to do the same! [tolerance.org/civility](http://tolerance.org/civility)

## Ask Teaching Tolerance



**Q.** Our school is very divided about where transgender students should change their clothes and use the restroom. I want to be on the right side of history, but I feel like we're not ready. Help!

A big part of not feeling ready may be tied to not knowing enough about what it means to be transgender. Start by educating yourself—and your colleagues—about the differences between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Becoming informed will prepare you to bust the many myths that fuel current anti-transgender sentiment. (The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice's "Dear Colleague Letter on Transgender Students" is a great place to find guidance.) As the knowledge base in your school grows, the tensions will subside.

One of the concerns most often cited in debates around school restrooms is that cisgender students will feel uncomfortable sharing these spaces with transgender students. First of all, this concern is based on an assumption (cisgender youth will be uncomfortable) that may be false or that could be addressed by educating the student body. Secondly, we know that transgender youth are frequently made to feel unsafe at school and that being forced to use restrooms that do not match their gender identities contributes to the danger they experience, including danger of being assaulted. Resisting

this policy change privileges the comfort (real or imagined) of one group over very real safety concerns, making marginalized students even more vulnerable.

It is important to keep in mind that the struggle for equal rights is always met with resistance. Left to their own devices, some schools might never be "ready." The discomfort your school's community is experiencing is a side effect of progress. If the experiences of schools that already have inclusive restroom policies are any indication, the discomfort is temporary.

**I'm interested in hosting a Mix It Up at Lunch Day**

**at the university where I teach. Has Mix It Up ever been attempted on a college campus? If so, do you have suggestions for making the event successful?**

College campuses are perfect settings for this program. Last year, over 50 institutions of higher education registered for Mix! These events were usually sponsored by an existing group that acted as a planning committee, such as a diversity organization, international student group, student government or SPLC on Campus chapter. Organizers determined a lunchtime activity to help students make connections across boundaries and experience "a-ha!" moments when they discovered they had things in common. They made the events festive and really pumped up the publicity to draw numbers. They also documented the events and held debriefs so they had great memories and lessons to build on for next year.

Teaching Tolerance offers a bank of customizable activities, tips and other resources at [mixitup.org](http://mixitup.org) to help you get started. Plus, there's a whole community of Mix It Up veterans out there who can offer advice and support. Be sure to register at [tolerance.org/mix-it-up/add](http://tolerance.org/mix-it-up/add) to join our community and start planning!

### ASK TEACHING TOLERANCE!

Need the kind of advice and expertise only Teaching Tolerance can provide? Email us at [editor@tolerance.org](mailto:editor@tolerance.org) with "Ask TT" in the subject line.

# Why I Support Trigger Warnings

“If at any point you must leave the class, please do so quietly. Several of the readings could be triggers, and I want you to feel safe in the class at all times.”

This “trigger warning” is bolded and italicized on my syllabus. ... Occasionally, students have never heard of the term *triggering*, even if it is something they may have experienced. Having that conversation about trigger warnings may help a veteran, sexual assault survivor or another person with post-traumatic stress disorder see that my classroom honors their challenges and resilience.

This conversation sets an open tone that lets students know I care about their safety and welfare. Even in this brief way, acknowledging the painful experiences some students carry with them into my classroom, before I even know students’ names, provides an opportunity for students to exhale before we even begin.



## And readers replied...

[I]f you didn’t have the warning in your syllabus, what would happen when potentially difficult material came up[?] Would the student not feel comfortable leaving the class? Would the student feel less safe without the warning? ... Of course we want all people to feel safe and not have to be faced with issues that may raise traumatic memories and feelings. Just not yet convinced of the best way to handle it.

One reason that it is helpful even if the rest of the class is exactly the same, the [trigger] statement establishes a reason to trust. Many people don’t feel safe telling people that they don’t feel safe.

READ THE FULL POST HERE:

[tolerance.org/triggerwarnings](http://tolerance.org/triggerwarnings)



## HAVE YOU SEEN OUR BLOG LATELY?

Check out some of the most talked-about blog posts. Go to [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org) and search for these headlines:



The Curriculum is in Your Backyard



Don’t Forget About Black Girls



Walking in Their “Zapatos”



Growing Seeds of Understanding

## DID YOU KNOW?

*19.9 percent of voters under 30 cast ballots in the 2014 midterm elections—the lowest youth turnout recorded in the last 40 years.*

—The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University

## Why I Teach



*Michelle Spathelf is a truancy teacher in Joliet, Illinois.*

## The Letters

It takes patience and a lot of love to do what I do each day. Some days, it takes a lot of tears, too. What makes my job absolutely worth it in the end? The letters.

I am an alternative high school teacher, and every one of my graduates has written me a letter. It is not something I assign or ask them to do; it is something that just happens. In each letter are memories from the class, lessons they recall and jokes that we had.

I teach a classroom full of truant teenagers at risk for dropping out. So many adults in my students' lives have given up on them. Much of the time, even their own families have given up on them; they are at their wits' ends, desperate for any help our

program can give their children. My job is to give these students and their families hope.

I am blessed to work in a computer-based program that helps students recover their credits. I guide and facilitate their computer learning, tutor them individually in all subject areas and teach P.E. and life skills classes. That is the easy part. Getting truant teenagers to come into my classroom in the first place is the tricky part.

Before I get a single letter, my connection with students begins with the tone that I set on the very first day of class: "This room is a safe place. We can share ideas in here. We are a family in here. When you are not here, I notice and I care. I will send someone to your house to find out why you are not here. And when you come back, I will welcome you. I will always tell you that I am glad you are here."

And, for the most part, the fact that someone cares enough to figure out why they are not at school is all they need. They come back.

Other times, my students do not come to school because their basic needs are not met. When they are hungry, I feed them and send them home with food.

I have been yelled at, cursed at, threatened, pushed around and moved to tears countless times at my job. I have been called every name in the book. And, often, I get this from my best students.

So ... why do I do it?

This is a question I get asked by just about everyone who finds out what I do. My response is always the same. "Not many people can do what I do. And it is because I truly care about my kids and want them to succeed." My students often tell me that

## SHARE YOUR STORY

What motivates you to get up each morning and serve students in our nation's schools?

We want to hear from you. Send your 600-word submission for the "Why I Teach" column to [editor@tolerance.org](mailto:editor@tolerance.org).

I must be very patient to work with them each day. The truth is, I understand where they are coming from. I remember my high school counselor telling me that I would never get into college or amount to anything. That message resounds in my head as I talk to my students. I know they have heard similar things over the years, and the last thing I want is for them to actually believe it.

When I get letters from my graduates, the bulk of what they say is “thank you”: thank you for never giving up, for noticing when they were sad, rejoicing when they succeeded, encouraging them when they struggled and crying with them when they cried. It is a thank you for helping to get them to that very point in life and a promise to keep in touch.

Knowing concretely that my teaching made a difference is why I continue to work with the anxious and downtrodden students who matriculate in my classroom. I have each letter put away somewhere safe so that, even on my bad days, I will remember why I do this work.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*The 1924 Indian Citizenship Act gave American Indians and Alaska Natives the right to vote, but some states, including Washington, New Mexico, South Dakota and Arizona, continued denying Native participation in elections for decades.*

—Demos

*Highlights of the National Museum of African American History and Culture collection include a 19th-century slave cabin, Chuck Berry’s Cadillac and a segregation-era railway car.*

—The Smithsonian Institution



**BLOG 6.14.16 // CLASSROOM PRACTICE, ACTIVISM, SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

## Please Talk About Orlando

In many ways, I have felt that there are no words for what occurred in Orlando. How could there be anything but grief, horror and immense sadness?

Yet, we must try to find words or share the words of others. We do not have the luxury of silence. ... We, as educators, are uniquely situated to do more than others because we have a rare gift: the opportunity to touch the lives and speak to the hearts of the next generation. *Every. Single. Day.*



### And readers replied...

What about when your admin is not the most progressive? How do you keep your job and work toward equity and justice in your classroom when your admin is not fully on board?

I reposted a quote this weekend that said, “Please love more loudly.” To me, that means love whether you agree with or understand, love by speaking up and speaking out, love by spreading compassion.

**READ THE FULL POST HERE:**

[tolerance.org/talkorlando](http://tolerance.org/talkorlando)

# Bridge Builder

Heidi Sipe is the superintendent of Umatilla School District in Oregon, a rural school district serving largely low-income students. Sipe was named the 2016 Oregon Superintendent of the Year, an honor that recognizes her leadership and commitment to helping *all* young people construct bridges to success.

**Congratulations on your award! What do you hope others can learn from hearing about your work?**

I think one of the things that's most important to me is just to remember what a gift it is to be educators and to get to work with the future. And, there's not a day that I don't appreciate the opportunity. ... The honor took me by surprise, in large part because I don't view this as my job, I view it as my passion and I just feel so fortunate to be able to do this work.

[I]t's been exciting to help people rethink their view of poverty and to rethink their view of students in rural areas. I think it's easy to make assumptions based off of what we don't know about one another. I hope that this provides all of our students the chance to be heard and really gives my students more support for what I see in them.

**Your district's motto is "Building Bridges to Successful Futures." How does that motto inform your work?**

We actually have four basic tenets to that motto. The first is providing quality educational opportunities that recognize individual needs of students. The second is exposing students to career options and pathways.



Not all educators stand at the front of a class. In each issue, we interview an outstanding educator who works outside the classroom.

*Heidi Sipe, superintendent of Umatilla School District in Oregon, is an award-winning district leader.*

The third, helping students develop a sense of self and community, and the last is embracing the power of parent and community partnerships.

There's a variety of opportunities that will arise, whether a different grant or a different program, and it's helpful to be able to come back to that and say, "Is this an opportunity that will *expand* options for our students?" If yes, then let's consider this and pursue it. If no, then it's probably something we should pass on because we need to really stay focused on our core mission.

**You started the STEM Academy of Umatilla. What motivated you to launch this K-12 afterschool program, and what effects has it had?**

The STEM Academy came about because we noticed that, if we were going to change the cycle of poverty, we had to be sure our students had job-ready skills. And, STEM fields are huge growth areas in our economy right now, and also—ironically—the very same skills that students in rural poverty are least likely to have access to.



*“One of the biggest changes that we’ve seen is the kids are dreaming new dreams.”*

It’s been hugely positive. ... One of the biggest changes that we’ve seen is the kids are dreaming new dreams, and that’s really what we wanted them to do. It’s hard to dream of being a software engineer if you’ve never met one and you don’t even realize that’s a job. For many of our kids, they simply don’t see jobs like that. If we want to empower them to choose their own futures, the way to do that is to show them a variety of futures, and the STEM Academy gives us an opportunity to do so.

**Is there a particularly memorable experience of yours as superintendent that you’d like to share with *Teaching Tolerance* readers?**

I think sometimes, as administrators, we become so focused on what’s next and where are we going next that we forget to just invest in where we are. I’ve been really fortunate to get to invest here and to appreciate the

opportunity to stay long enough to see those multiple generations of kids come through and to change.

I just now, today, got to meet with one of our former students who’s going to med school, and she’s a mom of two little ones. She was one of our teen moms when she was a kid, and she’s going to be working on our bond campaign coming up in November. To see her and know her as this young child, and then see her as a parent and see her really working so hard to get through school and do right by her children, and then also see her willing to come back and invest in our community by helping with this bond is, to me, one of those best days that just comes full circle.

**DOWN THE HALL**

Know an excellent administrator, librarian or counselor we should interview? Tell us all about them at [editor@tolerance.org](mailto:editor@tolerance.org).

**Lessons Learned**

Our classroom resources are grade-specific and align to the four domains of the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework: Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action. Find them at [tolerance.org/classroom-resources](http://tolerance.org/classroom-resources).

**My Multicultural Self—Identity**  
*(Elementary, Middle and High School)*

Help your students identify, explore and learn about the multiple parts of their identities.

**Understanding Other Religious Beliefs—Diversity**  
*(Elementary School)*

Build a more respectful school community by exposing students to multiple religions.

**The Voting Rights Act, 1965 and Beyond—Justice**  
*(Middle and High School)*

Students learn why the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was so powerful when it was enacted and discover roadblocks to its power today.

**The Early Republic—Action**  
*(Middle and High School)*

Explore with students what the Constitution *didn’t* say about voting, and learn why voting rights were originally limited to white men who owned property.

**FREE STUFF!**

These web resources offer information and materials for teaching about the 2016 presidential election—and more.

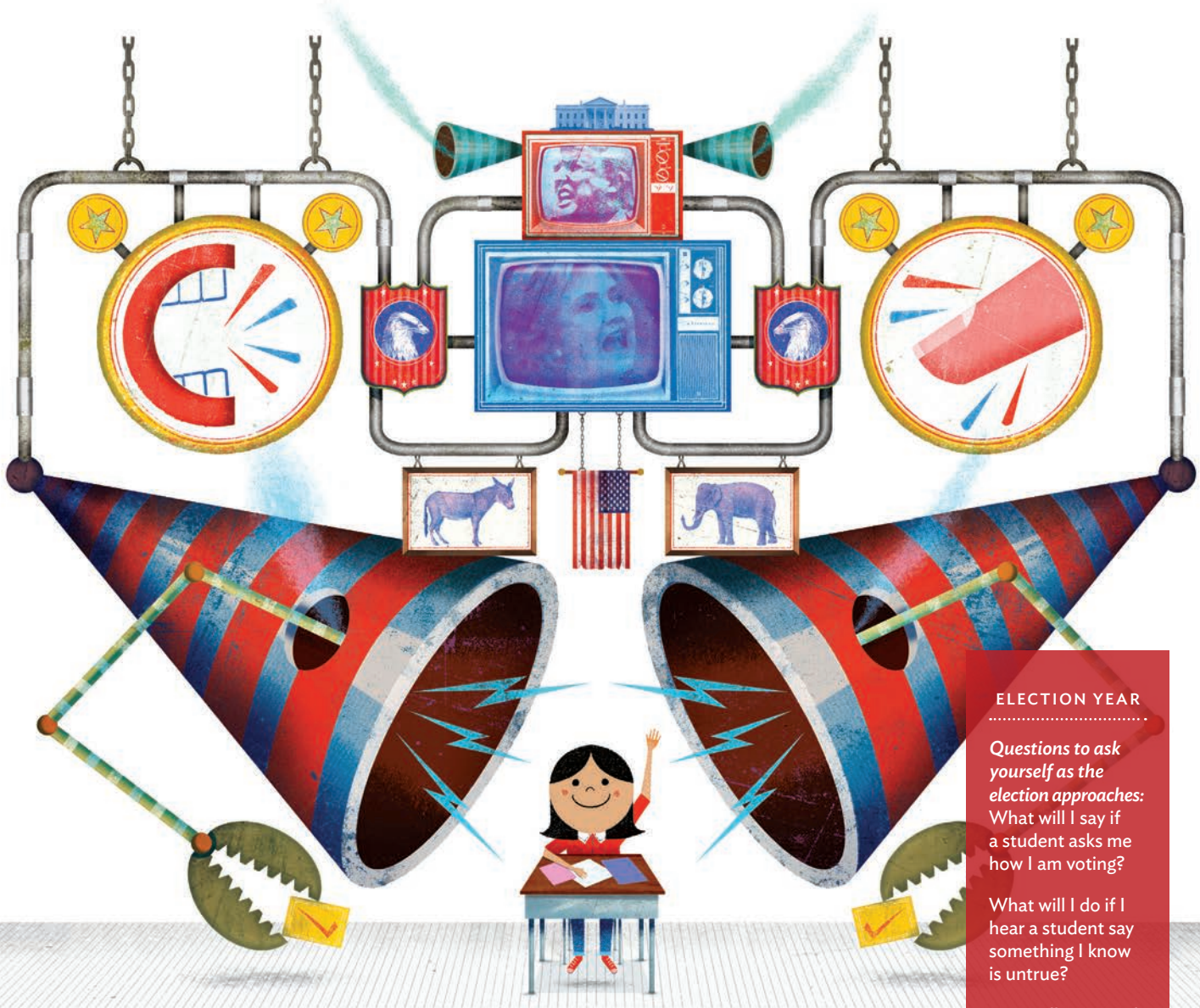
**The Learning Network**, a blog produced by *The New York Times*, provides lesson plans and teaching materials centered on *Times* content. Look for student contests, a Word of the Day and a Film Club. [learning.blogs.nytimes.com](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com)

**iCivics** offers fun, interactive resources to engage students in civic learning. The site contains a number of online games, digital activities and curriculum units. [icivics.org](http://icivics.org)

**PBS LearningMedia Election Central** is a subsite of PBS Education that houses multimedia resources to educate students about the 2016 election and the political process. [pbseduelectioncentral.com](http://pbseduelectioncentral.com)

**Factcheck.org**, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, aims to reduce confusion and misinformation in politics by fact-checking debates, political statements, TV ads and interviews. [factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org)





## Suggestions to help you navigate—and teach about—this year’s presidential election

Elections can evoke a wide range of emotions: from fear and anger to passion and hope. Try these tips to help you process your own emotions and remain objective this fall.

### ELECTION YEAR

*Questions to ask yourself as the election approaches:* What will I say if a student asks me how I am voting?

What will I do if I hear a student say something I know is untrue?

How will I respond when students repeat something inflammatory they’ve heard at home or on social media?

How will I respond if students label one another (wing-nut, extremist, radical, etc.)?

How will I approach other teachers who are pushing their political views on students?



**Speak Up for Civility!** This election season, pledge to put kids first by resisting divisive rhetoric, and encourage your school community to do the same! [tolerance.org/civility](http://tolerance.org/civility).

# Keep Politics Out and Values In

Take time to pay attention to your own feelings. Ask yourself: Can I leave my feelings about the election behind when I enter my classroom? What feelings do I have? Do I have ways to cope with my feelings?

## Three ways forward:

**1** Carve out time and space. Even if it is just a few minutes, stop and think about how current events make you feel. Journaling is a great way to do this.

**2** Talk with adults outside the classroom about your opinions and emotions. Taking care of your feelings on your own time makes it less likely you'll vent to or be triggered by students.

**3** Make a list of core values and democratic ideals for your classroom. Here are some to get you started:

### I will ...

#### ➔ Defend Equal Voice

Every student gets to speak and deserves to be heard.

#### ➔ Teach Democracy

This is a classroom of, by and for the students.

#### ➔ Make My Classroom Safe

We will establish norms that create a safe environment for all students.

#### ➔ Ensure Fairness

I will speak up when I hear or see bias, exclusion, prejudice and injustice.

Publicly commit to these values in your classroom and encourage students and colleagues to commit to them, too.



## We've Seen This Before

Mudslinging, scare tactics, name-calling, lies and promises that can't be kept aren't new in 2016. They're persistent features of U.S. presidential campaigns.

Past campaigns show that, even when the political rhetoric gets outrageous, the checks and balances of our constitutional system supported the democratic process. Here are five elections in which participants became notorious for their "bad behavior."

1800

This campaign's dirt was dished by surrogates—mainly publishers of extremely partisan newspapers—who didn't care too much about facts. John Adams' supporters called Thomas Jefferson an atheist, a "half-breed" and a libertine. Jefferson's claimed that, if elected, Adams would lead the country into war with France.

Jefferson won, and power was successfully—and peacefully—transferred from one party to another for the first time.

1828

Opponents charged that John Quincy Adams had gambling devices in the White House and, as ambassador to Russia, had pimped for the tsar. Adams' followers claimed that Andrew Jackson's wife, Rachel, was a bigamist and a "convicted adulteress," his mother a prostitute and Jackson himself a murderer.

1860

Abraham Lincoln's campaign poked fun at Stephen Douglas, saying he "talks a great deal, very loud, always about

## Election 2016 Resources

Back in the spring, we asked teachers about how the election was affecting them, their students and their schools. Here is what we learned:

- More than two-thirds reported that students—mainly immigrants, children of immigrants and Muslims—have expressed concerns or fears about what might happen to them or their families after the election.
- More than half saw an increase in uncivil political discourse.
- More than one-third observed an increase in anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant sentiment.
- More than 40 percent reported being hesitant to teach about the election.

Educators also told us what kinds of skills and tools they need to teach about the election. Here's a snapshot:

### COUNTERING BIAS

- ▶ Have facts at the ready to counter stereotypes.
- ▶ Provide positive portrayals of people from targeted groups.
- ▶ Help students talk about their own experiences.
- ▶ Recognize and respond to bias.

### CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Reassure students that their voices matter.
- ▶ Encourage students to participate in civic life.
- ▶ Teach about media literacy and how messages appeal to emotions.
- ▶ Insist that students support their claims and make reasoned arguments.

### GETTING ALONG

- ▶ Practice active listening skills.
- ▶ With students, establish ground rules for discussion.
- ▶ Foster a classroom culture that values diversity.
- ▶ Invite students to take the perspective of others.

Specific tools and additional recommendations can be found at [tolerance.org/election2016](http://tolerance.org/election2016).

## Community Buy-in

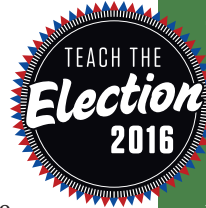
Once you have committed to upholding values in your classroom, share these values with your colleagues, administration, families and the community at large. Find common ground to promote both civil discourse and civic engagement.

### Basic rules for civil community discussions:

- ▶ Listen intently to what others are saying.
- ▶ Back up assertions and ideas with evidence.
- ▶ When refuting an argument, restate the argument being challenged; then, state your objection supported by evidence.
- ▶ Allow everyone to speak and be heard.
- ▶ Build in debriefing sessions.

### Tips for sharing these values with your community:

- ▶ Ask to present these ideas in a faculty and staff meeting.
- ▶ Create an online pledge around the ideas mentioned above, and have students, families, community members and school staff sign it.
- ▶ Nurture civil discourse as a central part of your school culture, even during nonelection years.



himself ... [and is] about five feet nothing in height ...”

**1928** Herbert Hoover won in a landslide, partially because his opponent, Al Smith, was Roman Catholic. Republicans claimed that Smith was building a secret tunnel

between the United States and the Vatican in Rome and would take orders from the Pope if elected. Protestant preachers told congregations that a vote for Smith “was a vote for the Devil,” and a KKK flier warned that all Protestant children would be declared illegitimate.

**1960** John F. Kennedy also faced a whispering campaign about his Catholicism and silenced the critics only after making a speech where he said he was an American first. He stoked fears, too, claiming that the country was weak because of a “missile gap” with the Soviet Union. It didn't exist.



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P O L L A R

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R O O M S

## UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL DIVIDES CAN HELP STUDENTS LEARN TO BRIDGE THEM.

BY PAULA MCAVOY

**IN FEBRUARY 2016**, the opening month of presidential primary season, I visited a public high school in New York City to teach a lesson about political polarization in the United States. The students were all black and Latino and had grown up in Manhattan, a borough that voted 84 percent for Barack Obama in 2012.

I began by explaining that I was going to give them one word and ask

them to write down all the words that came to mind when they heard that word. Then, I would give them a second word and they would do the same thing. The first word was *Republican*, and the second word was *Democrat*.

We then made a class list of the words they had chosen. Students identified many that one might expect. Republican lists often included *conservative*,

*capitalism* and *Donald Trump*. Democrat lists included *blue*, *Barack Obama* and *middle class*. When asked what they noticed about the lists, students immediately recognized that there was a difference in tone. The Democrat lists also included positive words like *honest*, *caring* and *supportive*. The Republican lists, on the other hand, included labels like *greedy* and *heartless*.



## How Did We Get Here?

The political climate in the United States did not become polarized overnight. Remind students of these key moments in history and how they helped ideologically “sort” the Democratic and Republican parties.

**1950s** Both the Republican Party and Democratic Party were ideologically moderate parties. Democrats are more ideologically mixed because their party is a coalition between Northern liberals and Southern conservatives known as “Dixiecrats.”



**1960s** The ideological sorting of the parties begins when the Democratic coalition weakens over federal desegregation efforts in the South. The split becomes irreparable after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



**1970s** The defection of Dixiecrats to the Republican Party, which began in the mid-1960s, begins to change the character of both parties, creating a more solidly liberal Democratic Party and a more solidly conservative Republican Party.

**1980s** Republican Newt Gingrich, who became a junior member of the House of Representatives in 1979, slowly changes the Republican strategy to rally his party behind a unified message with the goal of taking back control of the House. (Republicans had been in the minority since 1955).



**1990s** In 1994 the Republicans win the majority in the House for the first time in 40 years, in large part due to their “Contract With America,” a policy statement that detailed the party’s conservative legislative agenda. Newt Gingrich is elected Speaker of the House. Both parties are now “ideologically sorted,” and the effects of polarization become more evident and widespread.



The activity demonstrates what political scientists term “affective polarization.” That is, as our country becomes politically polarized, one effect is that people increasingly distrust—or disdain—those who identify as members of political parties to which they, themselves, do not belong. This trend applies to both sides of the primary partisan divide in the United States. A 2014 Pew Research Center survey found that 38 percent of Democrats and 43 percent of Republicans have a “very unfavorable” view of the other party. These numbers reflect a significant increase since 1994, when 16 percent of Democrats and 17 percent of Republicans reported a “very unfavorable” view.

The students at the Manhattan high school I visited are growing up in what my colleague and collaborator Diana Hess and I have labeled a “like-minded” school. (We define schools as like-minded if 80 percent of the students reported either solidly liberal views or solidly conservative views on a survey of eight political issues.)

We found that students who grow up in politically homogeneous communities (be they liberal or conservative) develop some positive civic characteristics. While in high school, they score significantly higher on a measure of civic engagement than their peers in politically diverse schools. After high school, they are more likely to pay attention to elections, and they are more likely to report that their families and friends think it is important to keep up with the news. In our study, they also voted in midterm and general elections at much higher rates than other young people.

But political science research also shows that people who have strong ideological views (solid liberals and solid conservatives) are also more likely to believe that the other side has no good views (political intolerance), dismiss credible information that does not comport with their views (confirmation bias), and believe that politics

is a battle between “the good team” and “the bad team” (affective polarization).

As anti-bias educators, we should be concerned about the negative effects of polarization. Democracy erodes when citizens do not enter the public sphere with a spirit of what Professor of Government Danielle Allen at Harvard University labels “political friendship.” She says that living in a democracy requires citizens to recognize that they will lose at times, but those losses are tolerable if we trust that our rivals will govern with attention to the common good.

### Civic Education in an Era of Polarization

For the past 25 years, the United States has been experiencing increasing political polarization; this is the only political context that young people today have experienced. Polarization also shows no signs of abating. Given this reality, how should teachers prepare young people for living in a democracy?

**Teach about polarization.** Political polarization refers to the division of political parties along ideological lines and movement away from the political center. It is important for young people to understand that polarization happens periodically, but it is not a constant feature of American democracy.

The current period of polarization began when the centrist “purple” parties of the 1950s and 1960s began to ideologically realign and transform into what many people now consider a liberal Democratic Party and the conservative Republican Party. This “sorting” of the parties began in the 1960s and was complete by the early 1990s.

Polarization has emerged from a confluence of trends. In addition to the ideological sorting of the parties, they include historically high levels of



income inequality, increases in immigration, and the appearance of 24-hour news coverage and the internet.

Teaching students what polarization is and what social forces contribute to it will better prepare them for the democracy they will inherit.

**Teach about ideology.** To understand polarization, young people need to learn both what ideology is and the competing values within various ideological positions. In its most simplified sense, political ideology answers three questions: What is a good society? How should we get it? What are the causes of the problems we see today?

Liberals and conservatives within the American context generally agree that democracy is the best way to govern and that we should achieve it through the

democratic structures outlined in state and federal constitutions. However, they tend to disagree about what a *good* democracy looks like. That is, they disagree about such foundational questions as:

➔ How much (if at all) should the federal government regulate the economy?

➔ How much political power should be given to states versus the federal government?

➔ To what extent (if at all) should the government provide a social safety net for the most vulnerable members of society?

➔ Which values should be given priority when they come into conflict (such as when civil liberties are in tension with national security)?

Helping students understand how and why liberals and conservatives have different political commitments and

values—and how those commitments and values evolved—is essential for understanding our partisan divides.

**Teach about income inequality.** In *Polarized America*, authors Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal show that, in the past 150 years, the United States has experienced two periods of extreme polarization: our current one and the years leading up to World War I. Both periods were also marked by extreme income inequality. The authors find that polarization and income inequality rise and fall with near perfect correlation, and they conclude that these two forces “dance” together in such a way that each exacerbates the other.

These two forces get linked, in part, because as income inequality rises, our ideological differences make it nearly impossible for people to agree on policies that might reduce the gap between the “1 percent” and the “99 percent.”

Liberals are likely to conclude that extreme income inequality is the result of the government not doing enough to regulate the behaviors of corporations and that policies like increasing the minimum wage or raising taxes on the very rich would improve the lives of middle- and low-income earners. Conservatives, on the other hand, are likely to conclude that government regulation of the economy inhibits job growth and causes more inequality. In this view,

less regulation, not more, is the solution.

Income inequality is a major social problem, in part because it erodes faith in the democratic system. Understanding



the root causes of both polarization and income inequality is essential for understanding contemporary American politics. If young people do not understand these trends, they will be left to interpret the world through the divisive behaviors of affective polarization.

### Undermining Affective Polarization in the Classroom

Discussing partisanship and income inequality in the classroom is difficult. Students struggle to understand these concepts. Teachers often worry about appearing partisan or upsetting families or administrators, and putting all of these issues together in even the most well-developed civics program is no easy task.

But examples of how teachers can approach these issues do exist. Ayo Magwood, who teaches 10th-grade U.S. history at Maret School, a private school in Washington, D.C., artfully waded into these waters with her final unit, “Inequality and the Dispossessed in Black and White.”

According to Magwood, the vast majority of students at Maret come from liberal families, and during the 2015-16 school year, she often heard students refer to Donald Trump and his supporters as “idiots.” This response did not sit well with Magwood, who aims to push students to understand what motivates people who think differently than they do. For this final unit, she decided to challenge students to investigate why people—particularly low-income white people—were drawn to Trump. Further, she noted that there was considerable overlap between the economic experiences of low-income white people and those of the poor black communities in nearby Baltimore that experienced civic unrest the previous summer.

Magwood’s unit set up a comparison between these two marginalized groups: In what ways were their experiences similar and how were they different? Why did one group turn to Trump

## IN ITS MOST SIMPLIFIED SENSE, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ANSWERS THREE QUESTIONS: WHAT IS A GOOD SOCIETY? HOW SHOULD WE GET IT? WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS WE SEE TODAY?

and the other to movements like Black Lives Matter?

Students were assigned to investigate one of the two groups. Each group read and discussed a packet of articles Magwood had curated to teach students about economic trends from the 1970s through today. Issues included the decline of unions, the loss of manufacturing jobs and the free-trade movement. Students also learned about how structural racism shapes urban policies that, to borrow from Ta-Nehisi Coates, “pillaged” black communities.

The unit culminated in an evening discussion to which families were invited. Even though the families had received some of the same classroom materials, Magwood says her students “were shocked at how one-sided and judgmental some of the parents were.” While the students had come to see that there were real economic problems motivating both poor white and poor black communities, parents had a difficult time moving beyond Trump’s inflammatory rhetoric to get at the issues.

Many of Magwood’s students reported that the unit was their favorite part of the course. In her view, Trump’s candidacy created a teachable moment that hooked students into learning about the history of economic inequality. Through that investigation, Magwood highlighted the role that competing ideologies play in responding to inequality and economic policy.

In the end, students moved beyond affective polarization and thinking, “They’re idiots” to the more reflective position of, “I understand why they feel this way, but I disagree.” Perhaps most important, they saw polarization and income inequality as social problems that we all share. ♦

*McAvoy is the program director at the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Center for Ethics & Education. She is the co-author, with Diana Hess, of the book The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education.*





# NO TIME OFF

AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY,  
MANY KIDS CARRY RESPONSIBILITIES  
FAR BEYOND HOMEWORK.

BY MAYA LINDBERG ILLUSTRATION BY ROB DOBI

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# Hudson had to continuously balance working toward a diploma and working toward a paycheck.

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**MILLIONS OF STUDENTS** in the United States leave school each day only to begin their “second shift”: out-of-school responsibilities such as employment, caregiving or parenting, or some combination thereof. For these students, classes are just one of multiple pressures shaping their lives—and the pressures often take a toll. These young people are at risk of disengagement, chronic absenteeism and dropping out altogether.

Educators may not always see the warning signs. Becoming attuned to the circumstances of children and teenagers with heavy out-of-school responsibilities takes training and practice, but it *is* possible, and the results can change lives. Knowing students’ stories and recognizing their competing pressures is the first step toward connecting them to necessary supports.

## A Continuous Balancing Act

“He ended up graduating—but barely.”

Katherine Pastor is a school counselor at Flagstaff High School in Flagstaff, Arizona, and the American School Counselor Association’s 2016 School Counselor of the Year. She recalls a former student named Hudson\* who had two jobs at fast-food restaurants to help support his mother and brother. His father had died. On school days, Hudson worked the closing shift, finishing at 1 or 2 a.m., returning home an hour later. Functioning on minimal sleep, he often missed the first hour of school.

“It took between me and the teachers and the administrators to try and help him figure it out,” Pastor says. She and her colleagues pulled Hudson out of one of his electives and set up an individualized study hall in the counseling office. But time was not Hudson’s only constraint; he had to continuously balance working toward a diploma—a personal goal—and working toward a paycheck—an immediate necessity.

## Fostering Support at School

Pastor says she usually learns of a student’s out-of-school responsibilities when something negative occurs, such as absenteeism or slipping grades. Once students like Hudson are identified, building trust is critical if their circumstances are to improve.

“Let them understand that those adults at the school are really there to help them and they care about them,”

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## Lightening the Load

Regardless of whether their schools offer wraparound services, all educators can advocate for students who carry heavy loads.

- Prioritize building trust and strong relationships with students. If a student is struggling, consider what’s going on in his life outside of school.
- Connect students with school- or district-based services that can support them both academically and at home.
- Research and leverage community organizations that can provide students with extra services—counseling, tutoring, childcare and so forth—that your school or district cannot offer.
- Get creative about when and where students can access academic support.
- Focus conversations on the roadmap to graduation, college and career.
- Examine personal and institutional biases about students who are employed, serve as youth caregivers or are parents.
- Set high expectations, but demonstrate flexibility and understanding of students’ circumstances. Alleviate stress whenever possible.
- Recognize that educating a student who is also an employee, caregiver or parent requires cultural competency skills.
- Collect and then share building-level facts about students who have heavy out-of-school responsibilities with other educators.
- Help students stay academically organized, and, if needed, find ways to provide them with school supplies.
- Inform students of their schooling options (flexible schedules, vocational schools, alternative schools, credit recovery and so forth). Be clear that not all options are equal.

Pastor says. “But until the kid trusts us with knowing that information, then we’re not going to be able to do much for them.”

Frances Esparza, assistant superintendent of the Office of English Language Learners at Boston Public Schools, echoes the importance of supportive classroom teachers. She says, “I would advise them to have high expectations for our students and to know that students are capable of managing their life either as a parent or being employed, as long as they have the support of the school and the teacher.”

In her role as a counselor, Pastor encourages students to speak to their teachers about their home responsibilities; sometimes she asks permission to do so on their behalf. This awareness building does two things: It helps dispel teachers’ assumptions that students are slacking off, and it leads to more supportive adult advocates at school.

Compared to white students, Latino students are 1.4 times more likely to attend a school with a sworn law enforcement officer but not a school counselor. Black students are 1.2 times more likely.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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In her work with classroom teachers, Pastor also emphasizes relationship building with students with large out-of-school responsibilities. “It’s as simple as standing outside your door and saying hi to every kid that walks in and smiling at them. Or when the student comes to school and you notice that they were absent the other day, instead of saying, ‘Hey man, where you been?’ saying, ‘It’s so great to see you today.’”

### Wrap With Care

Nationwide, the types of supports available to “second-shift” students can vary immensely, depending on a school’s ZIP code and budget, as well as the availability of school- and district-based services to meet students’ social, emotional and health needs.

Ideally, students have access to high-quality wraparound services. According to the National Wraparound Initiative, these services require a

team-driven process that supports the complex needs of children or youth and their families through individualized plans that are strengths-based, community-based and culturally relevant.

In Boston Public Schools, where Esparza works, wraparound services are a district-wide priority. The Office of English Language Learners works closely with, among others, the Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness and the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps. “The three [departments] have been working together to support our older students, especially with staying in school and moving into either vocations or into community colleges,” she says. That ongoing collaboration identifies the specific needs of students, including the ELL students who may also have large out-of-school responsibilities, and seeks to meet them holistically.

### Mind the Service Gap

Many students in the United States attend schools where wraparound services are absent and mental health and tutoring resources are stretched thin. Too often, services are limited where they are needed



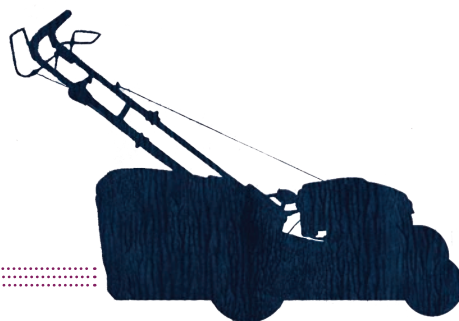
## The Caregiving Youth Project

In Florida, the School District of Palm Beach County and the Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) collaborate to support youth caregivers in grades 6–12, mostly at Title I schools. Youth caregivers are children and teenagers who care for relatives or household members who are elderly or have illnesses and disabilities. The CYP, a program of the American Association of Caregiving Youth, provides free skills-building group sessions, “Lunch and Learn” tables at cafeterias on topics like Alzheimer’s disease and multiple sclerosis, home visits, out-of-school activities and camps, at-home tutoring sessions and more.

Connie Siskowski, founder and president of the American Association of Caregiving Youth, says, “We work with helping them to manage stress, to be able to transform their anger and frustration into feeling valued, because what they do for their family is important not only for their family but also for society.”

One youth caregiver who received support from CYP is AnnMarie. In sixth grade, her grades were dropping and she had behavior and attendance issues. At home, she was frustrated to the point of hitting her mom—prompting a phone call to 911 and the involvement of the juvenile justice system. CYP intervened and worked with AnnMarie to help her manage a heavy responsibility: caring for her mother who was left partially paralyzed after a car accident. From sixth grade through her on-time high school graduation in 2013, AnnMarie had year-round support from CYP.

According to Siskowski, more than 95 percent of CYP students go on to the next grade level and graduate from high school. More than 80 percent continue on to postsecondary education or the military.



most: in low-income or under-resourced communities.

At Kenwood Academy, a public school on the South Side of Chicago serving grades 7–12, four counselors, one social worker and one school psychologist serve some 1,800 students. Seventy-four percent of Kenwood students come from low-income families, according to the 2014–15 Illinois Report Card.

Kenwood is not an anomaly. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, during the 2013–14 academic year, “About 95 percent of high school students have access to at least one school counselor.” But that’s not the complete picture; that same year, the national average student-to-school counselor ratio in public elementary and secondary schools was 491 to 1, according to the American School Counselor Association.

Shelby Wyatt, a school counselor at Kenwood and a 2013 finalist for the School Counselor of the Year, says, “Because of the nature of Chicago Public Schools and the budget crunch ... teachers have lost jobs; programs have been canceled because of the lack of funding. You need a human body. You need human capital to reach out to even assess, see who needs extra care.”

To fill in a gap in mental health services available to students, Wyatt founded the Kenwood Brotherhood in 2004. It’s a school-based mentoring program for male students, many of whom have multiple competing responsibilities. It’s not funded by Chicago Public Schools but by volunteers, including educators at Kenwood.

Aimed at increasing the graduation rate among males, the Brotherhood offers after-school meetings on Fridays, peer-to-peer leadership, activities and enrichment trips, tutoring and homework assistance. Wyatt also has partnerships with graduate schools of counseling, social work and psychology that send interns to Kenwood to counsel and provide mental health checkups to students in the Brotherhood.

One of Wyatt’s former students, Joshua\*, was on his caseload and part of the Brotherhood program. Every day, Joshua was responsible for getting his younger sister to and from school. “If we met on Friday after school, he would have to immediately go and get his little sister, bring her back to the high school, hold the Brotherhood meeting and then drive them both all the way out to the South suburbs,” Wyatt says.

### Advocate for Equity

Wyatt sees adult advocates as essential to educational equity. “Everyone should have an adult advocate in the building,” he says. At Flagstaff High School in Arizona, Katherine Pastor holds a similar perspective. In her work with students with heavy out-of-school responsibilities, she uses the word *advocate* all the time.

“We’re the student’s advocate, and they don’t know how to go through this,” she says. “They’ve never done it before, and so they don’t know the right channels sometimes. ... [W]e can help them learn how to advocate for themselves.” ♦

*Lindberg is a writer and associate editor for Teaching Tolerance.*

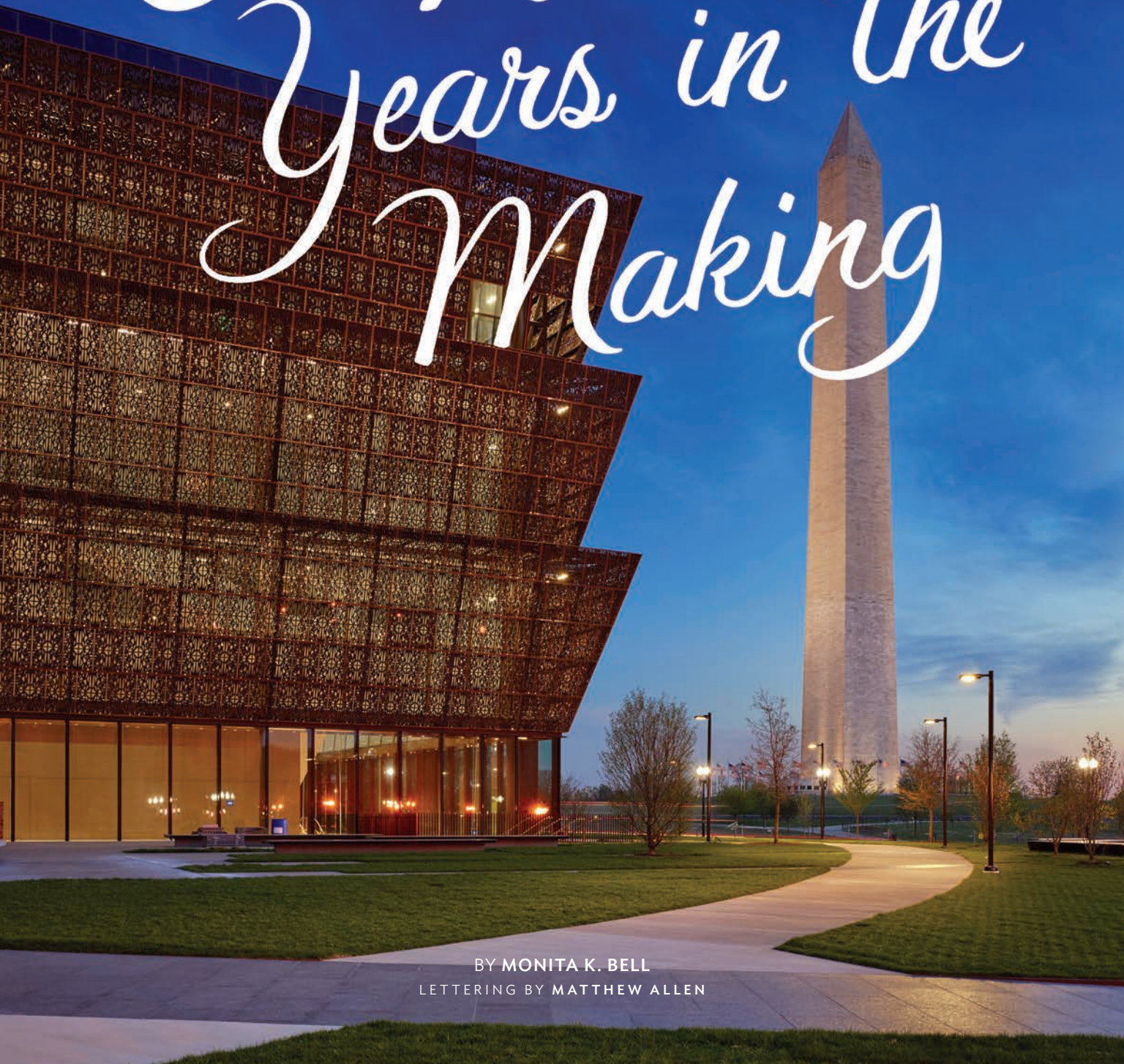


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Get to Know the Smithsonian National Museum  
of African American History and Culture

# One Hundred Years in the Making



BY MONITA K. BELL  
LETTERING BY MATTHEW ALLEN

ON JULY 25, 2016, when First Lady Michelle Obama addressed the Democratic National Convention, she pointed out the significance of hers being an African-American first family of a country with a long legacy of racial injustice, commenting, “I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves.”

Her words touched off a small-scale media debate about whether or not her assertion was true. News sources like Fox News, PolitiFact and *The New York Times* fact-checked her statement and confirmed that the federal government had indeed relied on the labor of enslaved people during the construction of the White House. Regardless, thousands of Americans took to social media expressing disbelief.

Obama’s speech—and the nation’s reaction to it—reflects a current and critical need that curators and educators at the Smithsonian Institution’s newest museum hope to meet on a broad scale: the need for a fuller, more robust understanding of freedom, justice, citizenship and history, informed by the voices and lived experiences of African Americans. The much-anticipated National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is slated to open in Washington, D.C., September 24, 2016.

### The Hundred Years Story

Although Congress passed the legislation that launched the NMAAHC in 2003, it could be argued that the museum has been in the making for the last 100 years.

“During the 50th anniversary of the Civil War in 1915, an African-American veterans organization was allowed to participate in the triumphant parade down Pennsylvania Avenue,” explains Esther Washington, NMAAHC’s director of education. “They had been excluded from the 1865 parade; their participation in 1915 was a sign of progress. It was this group that first envisioned a national memorial.” The group began fundraising and established themselves as the National



## “This is America’s story and this museum is for all Americans.”

— LONNIE G. BUNCH III, NMAAHC FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Memorial Association. In 1919, Congress held hearings on legislation to authorize a building that would, in the words of the National Memorial Association, “depict the [N]egro’s contribution to America in the military service, in art, literature, invention, science, industry, etc.” But funding was derailed by the stock market crash of 1920.

Over the next 100 years, the idea for a memorial evolved into the call for a museum, a place where African-American lives, history and culture could be documented and shared with Washington, D.C.’s hundreds of thousands of yearly visitors from across the country and around the world. But the journey to September’s opening was plagued by “fits and starts” (as Washington describes it) that mirrored African Americans’ unsteady march toward equality and full citizenship. Proposals to launch the museum stalled in Congress. Planners and city officials went rounds over the location.

Finally, in 2003, President George W. Bush signed an act of Congress establishing the NMAAHC as a Smithsonian institution. The five-acre museum site on the National Mall was selected in 2006.

### The Museum

The NMAAHC has a four-part mission: to provide an opportunity to explore African-American history and culture through interactive exhibitions; to help all Americans see how their stories, histories and cultures are shaped and informed by global influences; to explore what it means to be an American and share how values like resiliency, optimism and spirituality are reflected in African-American history and culture; and to serve as a place of collaboration that reaches beyond the nation’s capital.

September’s opening represents nearly a decade of searching for artifacts across a country whose history books have—as reactions to Obama’s





From left to right: poster featuring Tuskegee Airman Robert W. Diez; groundbreaking singer Marian Anderson and the dress she wore to perform at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939; a newspaper clipping chronicling the voter registration efforts of the Council of Negro Women; siblings James and Paula Baldwin. Below: election memorabilia from Shirley Chisholm's run for president.

speech revealed—largely erased, ignored or denied the lived experiences of black Americans. The museum will display over 37,000 artifacts grouped into exhibits on civil rights, clothing and dress, education, religion and slavery, among other topics, organized into three themed galleries: history, community and culture. Curators spent years collaborating with institutions that were independently documenting African-American history by collecting rare surviving artifacts. Some of the most notable installations: a 19th-century slave cabin from South Carolina, a segregation-era railway car and the Parliament-Funkadelic Mothership.

“From birth to every age that follows,” Washington promises, “we are planning something for you.”

### Looking at the Whole Learner

Like their curator colleagues, staff from the NMAAHC education department have been working for years in anticipation of the museum’s opening, piloting curricula with the goal of making them available to educators nationwide. Their primary focus? Telling stories of agency and resiliency through the African-American lens. “We want students to be more comfortable having conversations about identity than generations have been previously,” says

Candra Flanagan, coordinator of student and teacher initiatives.

To accomplish this goal, NMAAHC’s educational programming begins with early childhood and is rooted in positive identity development. Using art, literature and touchable objects, the early childhood facilitators drive home each child’s sense of self and role in a community while also enhancing their literacy skills.

“It’s all inquiry based, and it’s focused on how each person is unique,” Washington says, adding that children as young as 6 months old notice racial differences. “The research shows that if you can work with children on those areas as they are in their formative stages, they grow up much more open-minded and accepting of others.”

In the program *Everyone Makes a Difference*, little ones from pre-K through early elementary explore what people do to make a difference in their neighborhoods, homes and schools. Through art, literature and objects, they talk about people in history who have helped to effect change. A facilitator might, for example, use a gavel to discuss how African-American activists and attorneys have employed the courts to make the United States more racially just. Washington also gives an example of the role art plays in the curriculum:

## Not in D.C.? You Can Still Engage With the NMAAHC

Right now, you can explore over 7,000 of the artifacts featured in the NMAAHC with your students via the museum’s website, [nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection](http://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection).

To expand the experience, search for “African American” at the Smithsonian Learning Lab for over 17,000 results that can be filtered, downloaded, shared and “favorited.” Select the “Learning Lab Collections” tab to explore specific images and objects in depth. You’ll find learning materials provided by the Smithsonian’s education staff, including lesson plans and ideas, activities and discussion questions. Each Learning Lab Collection is also labeled by subject (e.g., civics, U.S. history, writing and literature) and age level. [learninglab.si.edu](http://learninglab.si.edu)

Over the next few years, resources for all NMAAHC collections—and the programs described in this article—will be available at [nmaahc.si.edu](http://nmaahc.si.edu). Materials for *Let’s Talk! Teaching Race in the Classroom* will be online by the end of 2016.

You can also celebrate the September 24, 2016, opening of the NMAAHC at your school through the “Life Every Voice” campaign. Host an event, and tell the museum—and communities around the country—how you and your students are celebrating African-American history and culture. Register here: [nmaahc.si.edu/lift-every-voice](http://nmaahc.si.edu/lift-every-voice)



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## The Importance of Space and Place

Opening a museum documenting the legacies of African-American life in Washington, D.C., is significant for many reasons. Slavery was legal in the nation's capital. Like most African Americans across the South, black people living in D.C. during the Jim Crow era suffered segregation, disenfranchisement and brutality. Today, D.C. remains a very segregated city where many African-American neighborhoods have been disrupted by gentrification. And the fact that the demand for a national space to memorialize the lives of black people wasn't met for 100 years is, to many NMAAHC supporters, an indication that the United States still has a long way to go in the journey toward racial equality.

The location on the National Mall is also critical to the identity of the museum. The 1963 March on Washington and the 1995 Million Man March both took place on the Mall. The museum is within view of the White House and the Washington Monument and near memorials to Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, all figures whose influences on African-American history are documented in the NMAAHC.



“We’ll talk about a story that an artist is telling, and it might be a piece that specifically focuses on justice or civil rights.” Children create self-portraits illustrating how they can make a difference.

Ashley Bessicks, a high school English teacher in D.C. Public Schools, has taught one of the most successful workshops developed by the museum: a five-day teen literature and writing workshop called *Power of the Written Word*. According to Bessicks, students engage in “intensive study of African-American literature, while honing skills in writing (like writing complex sentences, finding our own voices in writing, drafting narratives).” When Bessicks plans a workshop—which she’s taught for several summers—her objective is for the students “to share a learning experience—about literature, about writing, and open an authentic dialogue about self-identity, African-American culture, and explore our history.”

Each year, *Power of the Written Word* closes with a celebration that involves students and their families and allows students to share pieces they’d composed during the workshop. For Kelly Sidner, currently a high school senior, the summer 2015 workshop made her see herself as a poet.

“We had to write about invisible societies and invisible people in society, and I wrote about single black mothers because that’s who I was raised by,” Kelly reflects. “When I wrote about it,

it opened me up to my more poetic side, and I realized how I really enjoy writing poetry—and that’s also one of my most famous poems.” She’s performed the piece a number of times, and received her first-ever standing ovation.

### Supporting Educators

While the museum will have tons to offer people of all ages and walks of life, its programs will also cater to educators. One of their programs for educators centers on difficult subjects like slavery, race and racism. *Let’s Talk!: Teaching Race in the Classroom* is a week-long workshop in which teachers grapple with these topics—including their own personal journeys with them—and then gain techniques for teaching about them. “When we are working with educators, we seek to give them very age-appropriate language,” says Flanagan. “We work with educators and say, ‘Let’s start by talking about where your students are. Let’s think about where they’ve been and where they’re going developmentally. Then, let’s see how we can support you to teach about issues around race and identity from a place of strength.’”

Education is at the heart of this museum, from the interpretation of the exhibits to the downloadable print materials describing the artifacts to the in-person and online programming. “One of the first things we embraced was the role that education has always played in the African-American community and bettering people’s lives,” Washington observes, noting that it was once illegal for African Americans to be formally educated, but that black people throughout U.S. history have literally risked their lives to seek knowledge and preserve their heritage. NMAAHC staff honor that legacy and the work of educators. “We appreciate, applaud, respect, are in awe of the work that classroom educators do every day,” Flanagan emphasizes, “and we want to be here to support them.” ♦

*Bell is a writer and associate editor for Teaching Tolerance.*





# If It Can Happen Here...

When election rhetoric threatened their district culture, this group of California teachers organized a “Teach In.”

BY JEY EHRENHALT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHOHEY SINDEL

“**YOU SHOULD GET** thrown back to Mexico,” one first-grader said to another on the playground one day. “You’re gonna get deported.”

Their teacher, Tracey Iglehart, heard about the exchange.

In Berkeley, California, where Iglehart teaches, liberalism is the norm. In a town known for progressive ideas and radical political demonstrations, the anti-immigration sentiment caught her ear. “Teasing and arguments are common,” she recalls, “but using the threat of deportation as a tool of power—we haven’t seen that before.” Iglehart wondered where her students

had been exposed to the anti-immigration language.

It didn’t take her long to figure it out. Shortly thereafter, Iglehart explicitly overheard students expressing fears of being deported if Donald Trump—who was a candidate in the Republican primary at the time and whose platform includes removal of undocumented immigrants—were to be elected.

Iglehart follows the Southern Poverty Law Center on Facebook and, in April 2016, saw that Teaching Tolerance published a report called *The Trump Effect*. The report explained that the

2016 presidential campaign rhetoric is having a negative impact on the nation’s schools (as reported by 2,000 surveyed educators). It found that this election season has produced higher levels of fear and anxiety among students of color and intensified racial tensions in schools. Many contributing teachers commented specifically that their students worried about being deported.

After reading the report, Iglehart knew she had to do something about the anti-immigration sentiment on the playground. “We’ve got Black Lives Matter posters up all over our school that the teachers’ union made

“We don’t ask your immigration status in our district. We don’t care. We all belong, and it’s not OK to say that some people don’t.”

and distributed,” she says. “I got an idea: What if we did something similar to that?”

### Call to Action

Iglehart thought about who she could mobilize to help with her idea for a campaign focused on the message “We All Belong in Berkeley.”

“We don’t care where you’re from,” she emphasizes. “We don’t ask your immigration status in our district. We don’t care. It’s none of our business. We all belong, and it’s not OK to say that some people don’t.”

Several years ago, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT) had formed a group called the Teachers of Color Network. Another group, the East Bay Educators, had recently formed a

*Although many educators collaborated to organize the Teach In, the day was primarily architected by Jessica Arroyo, Julia Beers, Monique Debrit, Tracey Iglehart, Lisa Kelly and Gloria Munoz-Hughes.*

social justice collective to create culturally responsive curricula. Iglehart hoped that members of the Network and the Collective would join her and take a stand against the threat to their district’s culture. She called Lisa Kelly, a Network co-facilitator and Collective member, and asked her if she had read *The Trump Effect*. “This is happening in Berkeley,” she told Kelly. “My kids are talking about it, and they don’t know how to make sense of it. We have a lot of kids walking around scared that they’re going to get sent out of the country.” Kelly concurred. She said her students, most of whom are Latino, were also talking about “how his rhetoric impacts their lives.”

Iglehart proposed an idea: host a “Teach In” on April 29, the day Donald Trump would be in town. She also suggested papering the schools with posters based on the artwork of immigrant rights activist Favianna Rodriguez, who uses a butterfly as a symbol of

migration. Rodriguez gave them permission to use her image. The posters would say, “We All Belong in Berkeley” in English, Spanish and Arabic.

Kelly emailed a handful of Teachers of Color Network facilitators and got some other social justice educators on board. “We did not have a single meeting,” Iglehart remembers. “Some people in the group I have never met. It was all done by email, texting and a couple of phone calls in five days.”

From their separate locations, the teachers adapted Teaching Tolerance lessons to create a curriculum guide focused on immigration, identity and inclusion. The Sunday before the Teach In, Kelly sat down at a coffee shop and assembled a Google Docs folder where teachers could access K–12 lesson plans. Their goal was to frame the conversations positively—particularly with younger children—so as not to compound any existing fears. “We wanted to send a really strong message to our

students and to our community that ... it is never OK to say that some people don’t [belong] or that they will be sent away,” says Iglehart.

With the lessons assembled and the chosen date just days away, Iglehart turned to the BFT for support. The union had distributed Black Lives Matter posters throughout the





district, so she hoped they would also want to help with materials for the Teach In. The president was skeptical about the fast approaching deadline, but when she learned about the planning the teachers had already accomplished, she was on board and funded printing for 1,000 butterfly posters. Iglehart and her colleague, Network member Jessica Arroyo, worked together to distribute posters to every school in the district.

### The Teach In

In the days leading up to April 29, the participating teachers facilitated a series of classroom conversations about immigration. In Iglehart’s first-grade class, the students counted 22 countries of origin and 20 languages represented. In Kelly’s middle school classrooms, students discussed Trump’s rhetoric directly. In Arroyo’s fifth-grade classroom, they debunked myths about immigration and shared how coming to the United States influenced their lives.

The day of the Teach In arrived. Iglehart addressed her whole school, telling the students directly that they belonged there and that the day was for them. She also described how all students could become allies. “If you hear someone saying, ‘You have to leave because of where you’re from or the language you speak,’ you can speak up and say, ‘No. We all belong here,’” she told the assembled crowd.

Throughout the day, teachers all over the district taught the curated lessons, and students colored and

displayed the butterfly posters. Iglehart’s first-graders, who had been discussing immigration all week, played a game of musical chairs. One student remarked, “We’re all moving around just like people moving around in the world!”

Iglehart nudged them to go deeper. “What if someone who was left out or had gotten kicked out was asked to leave? How would that feel?” Ultimately, her students found ways to include those who had gotten out, like making room on their chairs or dancing in the middle of the circle. Every time her students included someone, Iglehart colored in a piece of the butterfly image. “At the end, our butterfly was all colored in and more beautiful,” she remembers, “much like our country when we include everyone.”

Meanwhile, in third grade, students studied their families’ immigration stories. Teachers emphasized that not everyone has an immigration story; American Indians were the original inhabitants of what is now the United States. And not everyone’s immigration story is voluntary; refugees and enslaved people were forced to leave their homelands. The educators worked with students’ families to make sure the stories touched

*In the days leading up to the Teach In, immigration was a topic of conversation in classrooms throughout the district. Students across grade levels told their teachers, “I’m so glad we’re finally talking about this.”*





Children across the Berkeley Unified School District engaged with the message “We All Belong in Berkeley” through a butterfly motif poster designed by immigrant rights activist Favianna Rodriguez.

on appropriate levels of information since many immigration experiences involved painful details.

The event unearthed a greater awareness of ancestral immigration stories, as well as buried shame about being kidnapped by slave traders or crossing borders illegally from war-torn countries. Teachers overhead students saying, “I’m so glad we’re finally talking about this.”

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

The Teach In did more than unite the children of Berkeley around a common belief; it changed the way their teachers view anti-bias education.

“When deciding whether or not to broach the subject of immigration, don’t make the mistake of thinking kids aren’t talking about these things because they are,” Iglehart advises based on the event. She points out that educators can discuss the value of a pluralistic history without promoting a particular political viewpoint.

The East Bay Educators and the Teachers of Color Network members urge adults in schools to confront immigration-based bullying immediately. “Kids wonder, ‘Who’s going to stand up for me?’” says Kelly. “They look at, ‘Who’s going to sit by and watch me be oppressed?’”

Jessica Arroyo, another Network facilitator, recommends finding allies. “When you’re that person who is always trying to be anti-imperialist in the classroom, you’re not the most popular person at school,” she says. She points to camaraderie—having “homies” doing the same work—as instrumental to success. “Link up and inspire each other,” she encourages. “Otherwise, it’s very easy not to care.”

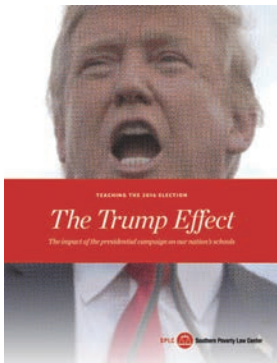
Network teachers cite families as key components of effective action. Families are powerful, Arroyo stresses, because kids’ identities develop within that structure. She suggests connecting with parents, caregivers and relatives whenever possible. “The moment parents are asking for it, boom, we make it happen,” she says. “It has to happen ... because that’s the community we serve.”

Arroyo also encourages her fellow educators not to doubt their ability to create change. “Our job as educators is to take whatever the community struggle is and teach about it,” she says. “Teachers can affirm people’s identities in the classroom. The moment [students] notice that their identity is celebrated, they’re all about it.”

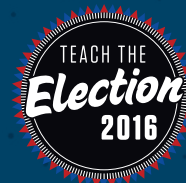
The coalition of educators who participated in the Teach In plan to use their momentum to push for more positive change. Arroyo has started a Muslim family support group at her school, and the Network hopes to expand the group to sites throughout the district. They also plan to design curricula for the 2016-17 school year that gives voice to more people of color and to use the day of action as an entry point into the work.

“After the ‘We All Belong in Berkeley’ posters,” Iglehart says, “the next step is, ‘We All Belong in the Curriculum.’” ♦

*Ehrenhalt lives and writes in Western Massachusetts.*



Teaching Tolerance wrote *The Trump Effect* based on experiences reported by over 2,000 educators.



TEACH YOUR STUDENTS TO...

# ROCK THE VOTE

THIS MISSION-DRIVEN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION CAN SHOW YOU HOW.

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY MARGARET SASSER AND ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK

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**ROCK THE VOTE** (RTV), a nonprofit and nonpartisan voting advocacy organization, has been getting young people registered and energized to get to the polls since 1990. On the pulse of American pop culture and music, RTV represents the interests of young voters and the realities of the 21st-century electorate. Sarah Audelo, RTV's former political and field director (and a former educator herself!), chatted with Teaching Tolerance about what issues impassion future voters and how schools can inspire them to engage in the democratic process.

**The organization clearly has great brand recognition, but what does it really mean to “Rock the Vote”?**

Rocking the Vote really means that you are engaging in our country’s democracy. We, of course, do a lot of work on voter registration and turnout, and presidential years especially are huge for us. We also know that, year-round, there are elections happening all the time across our country, from the presidency all the way down to school boards, city council races and state legislator races. Rocking the Vote is really about making sure that young people are engaged all up and down the ballot, but then also beyond voting. How can we make sure that we are holding the elected accountable for the promises that they make during election? How do we make sure that we are making demands of those who are supposed to represent us? To address the issues that we care about? How do we even encourage other people to run themselves, and make sure that our communities are being fully represented in our democracy?

**Tell us about Democracy Class and how it came about.**

Democracy Class is a free lesson plan, really. There’s a 45-minute version [and] there’s a 90-minute version, depending on the environment that educators are operating in, that walks through the history of voting, talks about the importance of young people voting and then [offers] an opportunity for a mock election and a registration component at the end.

This came about because—if we look at the research—it’s incredibly important to make sure that these messages about civic engagement and voting are happening early and often. So many educators will partner with RTV across the country on Democracy Day, but really, throughout the year, these lesson plans [can] make sure there are these larger messages about [student] voice, their power, and registering to vote and then turning out.

**Does Rock the Vote offer anything for young people under the age of 18? Why do you think people under the age of 18 should care about voting?**

When it comes to those who are under 18, one of our biggest messages is “Your voice matters, too.” For those who are under 18, they are so incredibly impacted by elections because it’s the schools that they are stepping in every day, it’s the playgrounds that they are playing [o]n, it’s the summer jobs that they hope to get, it’s the curriculum [that] is or is not being taught in their schools, it’s about who is controlling the military when many of them under 18 are frequently enlisting to join, or those who are 18 enlisting to join. [T]here are so many ways that these elections absolutely impact their lives, let alone what elections mean to their parents and family and community members who might be dealing with immigration or other battles that are happening in the country right now.

I think the thing to remember is that there are certainly many things that young people can do. They can register voters. For those that are able to drive, they can drive folks to the polls. They can also make sure that their family members and their friends and their community members are participating on election day. We’ve seen really great [instances of] young people who are going to town halls and going to rallies and asking questions directly at candidates: What are they going to [do] for themselves or family or friends or community?

**What do you think are the biggest issues concerning young people today?**

Education and the economy, and they tend to be battling out for number one and number two. We know a lot of young people understand the importance of higher education, but they also know how incredibly expensive college has gotten and the high student debt loads that they are forced to take out in order to complete their education. We also know that the millennial



*Rock the Vote’s Democracy Class brings the experience of voting to life for students who are still a few years shy of casting their first ballots.*

generation was hit hardest by the recession, and it’s still trying to flip-flop out of that. We have much higher rates of poverty for young people now than previous generations the same age; we have stagnant wages; we’re still fighting for equal pay; the cost of child care is staggering and really hitting families hard.

I think if we also look at what’s happening in social justice [and movement] spaces, we see people leading on issues like immigration, police brutality, reforming the criminal justice system, but also on climate change. And young people have been leading on driving the conversations that have really shifted how people running for president are talking about many issues.

**What have you learned from the Rock the Vote/USA Today Millennial Survey?\***

What we do know from our last poll that came out is, not only in January were 60 percent of the generation following and planning on engaging [in the 2016

DUTCH FORK HS, IRMO, SOUTH CAROLINA



“IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT, WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE, WE’RE NOT JUST DROPPING IN FOR AN ELECTION CYCLE.”

election], we are up to about 75 percent right now. We anticipate that number just going higher and higher the closer that we get to November. Young people are engaged.

Voting is the way to impact the issues that they care about. About 75 percent, three-fourths of the generation, absolutely agree with that statement.

For us, there are opportunities for those who are running for office to engage with young people and make sure they are talking about the issues they care about. We obviously know a lot of folks tend to go to college campuses, but we know there’s a lot of young people who are not on college campuses, either because they never went or they finished, and so we need to make sure there’s a much rounder message, frame and strategy when it comes to trying to reach young people and talk about the issues that they care about.

**As a former educator, what are some of the most valuable things adults in schools can do to promote voting with their students?**

It’s really exciting when we have communities where 16-year-olds are able to vote in local elections; making sure that we’re registering our students is

really important. I love when there are community service requirements, really getting students out in the community to interact with folks. [Students] registering people to vote is a really awesome tool, and then making sure that our school districts look at other models that promote student poll workers, because when we have poll workers, they have conversations about registration, voting and turnout, [and] that’s just better for our democracy overall.

**How can educators help combat barriers to voting?**

When it comes to engaging young people, it can’t just happen in a voting silo. Some of the most important work that we’ve seen when it comes to young people registering and turning out is some local organization doing amazing work year-round on issues that may include voting and voting rights advocacy, but also branch out to other issue areas, whether it’s higher education, climate change, the economy or reproductive rights. It’s really important to make sure that, when we talk about engaging young people—and especially young communities of color and communities that are in high need—we’re not just dropping in for

an election cycle, but that we’re really trying to build up a year-round infrastructure of engagement.

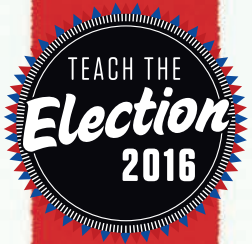
**What can educators and students do for Rock the Vote? How can they get involved?**

They can go to rockthevote.com and pledge to RTV. If they haven’t registered and they’re able to, we’d love for them to come on over and register on our site. And once they pledge to RTV, we can be sure to send them opportunities to volunteer when they’re in their communities. If they’re interested in hosting their own registration drives or partnering with local organizations in their community to work with, we can help them figure that out. ♦

*Sasser is the research associate and van der Valk is the managing editor for Teaching Tolerance.*

\*Findings from an Ipsos poll conducted January 4-7, 2016, on behalf of USA Today. For the survey, a sample of 1,141 adults age 18-34 from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online in English.









You want to teach about the election, but there's a lot of hostility and tension getting in the way. Here's your quick guide to surviving the weeks leading up to November 8.

**FOR MANY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS,** presidential election season is like a months-long holiday. What could be more fun than giving students a real-time lesson in civic engagement, complete with campaign buttons, stars-and-stripes bunting and mock debates?

But this year, many students across the country are missing out. Why? Because educators are wary of teaching an election that features an inflammatory—often bullying—tone, hostile polarization between parties and candidates, and political promises that target Muslims and immigrants.

This year feels so extreme that nearly half the educators who responded to a Teaching Tolerance survey conducted in March said they hesitated to teach about the 2016 election at all. “It is so inflammatory that no one wants to even discuss it,” said one New York middle school administrator via the survey. “Not good when we should be talking about issues.”

To help support teaching about the election, we selected five questions and concerns that educators raised repeatedly in our survey. We hope the answers will help you find the fortitude to “teach 2016.”

## ★ MY STUDENTS WANT TO KNOW WHY THEY CAN'T USE CERTAIN WORDS OR PHRASES AT SCHOOL WHEN THEY HEAR THE CANDIDATES SAYING THESE SAME WORDS OR PHRASES ON TELEVISION. ★

If your students are elementary age, begin by reminding them of the norms you have in your classroom about respectful language. Tell them those guidelines have not changed, but that it's time to talk about them again. Ask students why they think someone might use hurtful words or phrases, and encourage them to think of another way to achieve that goal. Situate the words or phrases in settings they understand. (*Is it OK to call people "losers" at a baseball game? No, that's being a poor sport.*) Help them understand that grown-ups may forget or break the rules, but if *everyone* neglected to be kind to one another, the world would be a very hurtful place.

When older students raise this question, invite them to keep asking questions that will build their critical thinking skills. Examples might be, "Who do you think the candidate is trying to appeal to with that language?" or "What political goals do you think he or she is trying to meet?" Show examples from past campaigns that will give them context and allow them to filter language they may hear in the political arena. (See PD Café on page 15 for examples.) Make it clear that this election has more mudslinging than usual, but that your school's standards for civil discourse have not changed, even if standards at debates and town hall meetings have.

If students are repeating language that targets people for their identities, take the opportunity to talk about "othering." With young children, discuss why it can hurt people to focus on only one aspect of their identities. For older students, offer examples of how othering has been used to perpetuate social divisions in the past. Encourage students to ask, "Does using this language encourage people to view people as different and lesser?" and "Who has more power: the candidate or the people they're talking about?"

### ★ WHAT CAN I SAY TO A STUDENT WHO REPEATS XENOPHOBIC IDEAS THEY HEARD FROM A CANDIDATE, FAMILY MEMBER OR TRUSTED ADULT?

Xenophobia—a fear of people who are foreign or perceived to be foreign—is hardly new. Although the targeted nationalities change, immigrants have often been the object of intense distrust, even hatred. Offering this historical context can be a first step toward helping students think critically about the comments they're hearing.

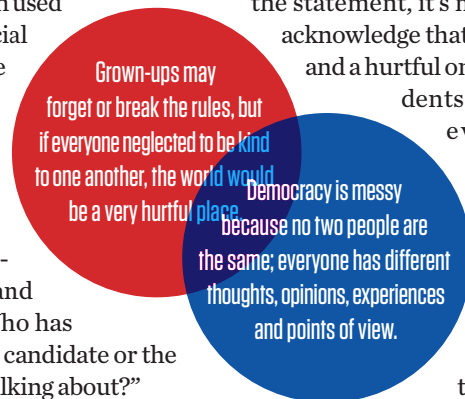
Consider discussing the larger subject of immigration: Why do people come to the United States? How have immigrants been received in the past? What contributions have they made? This offers you the opportunity to explore immigrant stories, including stories of discrimination and even violence, in ways that can lead students to re-examine the beliefs they're repeating. (See "If It Can Happen Here ..." on page 31 for a profile of a district that used Teaching Tolerance lessons to curb xenophobic comments.)

It's difficult to tell a student that what they heard was wrong, especially if it came from a parent, but speaking up is imperative. While your first impulse might be to refute the statement, it's more effective to acknowledge that it's an opinion—and a hurtful one. Model for students how to look for evidence when derogatory ideas are presented as facts. Here are some initial questions you might invite the entire class to ask:

- ➊ What do you mean by that?
- ➋ Where did that idea come from?
- ➌ What are the assumptions behind this idea?
- ➍ Is what's being said true? What's the evidence?
- ➎ Can you think of any counterexamples to this statement?

In the long term, make it a habit to test claims in class so that students build their critical thinking muscles.

Finally, plan a lesson on stereotypes so that, when they emerge in class discussions, you can ask, "Wait a sec. Is this a stereotype?"



★ HOW CAN I REASSURE IMMIGRANT AND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WHO ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION?

Reiterate to students and families that schools have a legal and ethical responsibility to keep students safe. Educators and administrators, for example, cannot disclose student records without a subpoena. Even so, staff may need training on the issues undocumented families face. Lean on community organizations or institutions of higher education that can offer basic literacy on immigrant rights. The American Immigration Council is a valuable resource for background on this issue.

Student fears around deportation may be entirely founded. While you can't tell them deportation isn't a threat, you can help them cope with the stress. Be aware of situations that might trigger anxiety, such as when a parent is late picking them up from school. Schedule support sessions with counselors, teachers or other staff members who can offer safe spaces for talking through feelings and engaging in mindfulness exercises. Hold sessions for families; ask how they reassure their kids, and inform them about the tools and techniques the school is using to relieve anxiety. Again, rely on community resources to help you meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

Above all, stay alert for signs that undocumented and immigrant students are being targeted at school. Students need to know that the school is safe and that the adults who work there have their backs—especially when the rest of the world feels so inhospitable.

★ STUDENTS ARE USING THEIR SUPPORT OR NONSUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATES TO ISOLATE OTHERS FROM SOCIAL GROUPS. HOW CAN I LET THEM KNOW IT'S OK TO SUPPORT DIFFERENT CANDIDATES AND STILL BE FRIENDS?

Whatever their age, remind students, "It's possible to disagree without being disagreeable." Nobody is defined exclusively by their stance on an issue or by the candidate they support. Encourage young people to look for common ground rather than isolating themselves from each other. What do they all care about? What can they agree on?

Emphasize with students that democracy is messy because no two people are the same; everyone has different thoughts, opinions, experiences and points of view, and this diversity is valuable. That's why it is especially important that we listen, make space for people to express their ideas and question the ideas of others.

We also have to be ready to compromise because, in a democracy, everyone should count and everyone's voice should be equal. We don't have to agree on everything, but we must honor each other's right to take a position when it comes to candidates and political issues.

Just because our voices are equal doesn't mean our ideas are equally true. Some ideas aren't supported by evidence, so encourage students to ask each other, "How do you know?" Students should also be encouraged to speak up and challenge hurtful ideas, understanding, again, that their right to challenge a political belief is equal to that person's right to hold it. Remind them that freedom of speech is not a guarantee that what they say will never result in consequences.

Finally, underscore that getting along doesn't mean everyone thinks the same way. Tell them about all the famous rivals who managed to be friends: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. LeBron James and Dwyane Wade. Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa. Or about Mary Matalin and James Carville, a married couple who work for opposing parties.

★ MY STUDENTS WANT TO KNOW HOW I PLAN TO VOTE IN NOVEMBER. WHAT SHOULD I TELL THEM?

Tread carefully. Politics is like religion: Teach, don't preach. Your school or district may have a culture that would discourage this level of disclosure. Ask your principal about relevant policies, and talk with colleagues so you're not caught off guard.

Once you determine you're on steady ground, consider the words of Jonathan Zimmerman, a professor of education at New York University, who says that the idea that teachers should hide their politics is "not quite right." He points out, "Just like anyone else, teachers should be free to express their political opinions in school." But, he adds, they must make it clear that students are free to form their own opinions.

If you decide against sharing, talk instead about how you make a decision. An example might be, "I look for the candidate who is most likely to pay attention to education and the needs of senior citizens," or "I don't vote on the issues as much as I look at a candidate's character. I ask myself, 'Is this person kind, caring and truthful?'"

Regardless of whether or not you disclose, ask your students why they want to know how you're voting. This can open a discussion that can help you get to know your students better; they may be seeking ways to connect with you via a common political belief. Capitalize on this engagement and try to move them from the micro view (how you as an individual are voting) to the macro view (the importance of civic participation at local, state and national levels). Show them concrete ways to voice their opinions on issues and candidates, even if they're under 18. ♦

► VIDEO ◀  
Hear members of the Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board talk about how they handle election-related roadblocks. [tolerance.org/ttab-election](https://tolerance.org/ttab-election)





This excerpt was adapted from Dr. Carol Anderson's book *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. In chapter three, "Burning Brown to the Ground," Anderson details how white politicians in the North and the South systematically resisted legal demands to desegregate schools, including the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

This excerpt focuses on how state-level resistance played out in the state of Virginia.

# BURNING BROWN TO THE GROUND

**JIM CROW DOMINATED** the lives of black people in America from 1890 well into the twentieth century. ... In the early 1930s, under the direction of brilliant legal tactician Charles Hamilton Houston, the NAACP launched a campaign in the courts to destroy Jim Crow and overturn the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that had made "separate but equal" the legal cornerstone of racial segregation in America.

Virginia, despite being the wealthiest Southern state and the fifth richest in the entire nation, with a constitution and statutes requiring the provision of public schools and compulsory attendance, was ... determined not to educate its black population. In Prince Edward County, for example, no high school existed for blacks until 1939, and by 1947 Robert Moton High "was jammed with more than twice the number of students it was designed to hold." ... The other black schools in Prince Edward County, too, were

poorly constructed with no indoor plumbing and thus serviced only by outhouses.

In the Deep South, the educational opportunities were at least as bleak. ... [In 1941, the federal government estimated that it would require, in 2014 dollars, \$1.2 trillion to equalize the schools in America.] The result of such widespread disparities in funding was that the U.S. educational system, despite the demands of parents and students craving high-quality schools, had deliberately produced a sprawling, uneducated population that would bedevil the nation well into the twenty-first century.

In one court case after the next, from 1935 to 1950, the NAACP had convincingly demonstrated that Southern governments were simply incapable of meeting *Plessy's* Jim Crow standard of "separate but equal." And because the legal bedrock of the South was predicated on that dictum, the proven inability to have both equal and separate simultaneously left

BY CAROL ANDERSON ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL ZENDER

Dixie in judicial danger, which was just as Charles Hamilton Houston intended. With the legal precedent duly laid, the time to take down *Plessy* as fundamentally unconstitutional was now. Houston's protégé, Thurgood Marshall, led the next phase of this legal battle. ... In December 1952, Marshall argued before the U.S. Supreme Court that racial segregation violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth as well as the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. And with that, a series of legal, political, and cultural explosions went off below the Mason-Dixon Line ...

Th[e] day of reckoning came. After nearly sixty years of racial purgatory, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown* that Jim Crow schools violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and, in the D.C. case [*Bolling v. Sharpe*, one of five cases the made up the *Brown* case], the due process requirement of the Fifth Amendment. Even the [NAACP's] taciturn Roy Wilkins could barely contain himself. "May 17, 1954, was one of life's sweetest days," he later recalled. Nor was the significance of this judgment confined to the education of black children. "If segregation is unconstitutional in educational institutions," observed Charles Johnson, president of Fisk University, "it is no less so unconstitutional in other aspects of our national life." At that moment, it appeared that citizenship—true citizenship—might finally be at hand for African Americans.

To Southern leaders who had already been readying their political arsenal, the decision in *Brown* was but a declaration of war. Wilkins later admitted, "My sense of euphoria was a bit naïve. Swept away, elevated, exalted, I failed to anticipate the ferocity of the resistance that quickly grew up in the Deep South." There was a "cold, clinical cruelty of the response."

[T]he Southern states made clear that they were ready for war. The first step was to ensure that only those who felt threatened by *Brown* could vote. ... As difficult as

voter registration had been before *Brown*, it became much more so after the ruling. ... [African American voter registration in predominately black counties in Alabama, for example, ranged from 0 to 0.9 percent. In Mississippi, by 1960, 98 percent of age-eligible African Americans were not registered to vote.] States relied as well upon another mechanism of insidious discrimination ... : Legislative apportionment gave overwhelming and disproportionate power to rural counties, especially those that held the most ardent white segregationists and the largest black populations outside the urban areas.

On May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court handed down an implementation decision, *Brown II*, stating that desegregation in public schools must happen "with all deliberate speed." Recognizing that disfranchisement and legislative apportionment would not be enough to stop the progress stemming from *Brown*, the Deep South and Virginia soon added to their arsenals the discredited legal hocus-pocus of interposition, which argued that the state could put itself between federal law and U.S. citizens to stop enforcement of any ruling with which the state disagreed.

The so-called Southern Manifesto, however, was the shot heard around America. On March 12, 1956, Representative Howard Smith (D-VA) and Senator Walter George (D-GA) introduced "the Declaration of Constitutional Principles" before their respective chambers in Congress, asserting that the Supreme Court had violated states' rights, abused judicial authority, and undercut the separation of

powers. Signed by 101 members of Congress, all from states of the old Confederacy—Senator Lyndon Johnson (D-TX) was one of only a handful of holdouts—the Southern Manifesto signaled to their constituencies that Massive Resistance to *Brown* was not some base, primeval white supremacy but rather a principled, patriotic stand to defend the Constitution. The Southern Manifesto gave sanction from the highest levels to use the levers of government to defy the U.S. Supreme Court until, with the federal judiciary and African Americans tiring of the fight, *Brown* simply collapsed.

The game plan of stall and defy was now in place. Southern states used and abused the legal process to pass one unconstitutional law after the next, knowing that the process to overturn the statutes would be costly. [As one segregationist attorney general noted, "As long as we can legislate, we can segregate."] ... Those extended legal battles allowed year after year to drizzle by while the continued existence of separate and decidedly unequal schools consigned black children to some of the worst education that America had to offer.

In Virginia, the birthplace of Massive Resistance, a full decade after *Brown*, only 1.63 percent of blacks were attending desegregated schools. ... [W]hen local school boards in Charlottesville, Norfolk, and Front Royal were under federal court orders to admit black students, Governor James Lindsay Almond closed, in his words, every "school threatened with desegregation." Ironically, because the white, well-funded schools in those cities matched that description (no one was clamoring to integrate overcrowded Moton High in Prince Edward County), he had shut out nearly thirteen thousand white children from getting an education.



While *Brown v. Board* initially felt like a victory for African Americans, it quickly galvanized resistance to racial integration.

## Systematized racism not only destroys black lives but also undermines the very strength of the United States.

School closures spread now to besieged Prince Edward County. This time, black children were in the cross-hairs, where they would remain for nearly a generation. With *Brown* looming over their heads, Virginia's political officials passed a series of laws to close the public schools, siphon tax dollars into private academies, and pay tuition for white students, while ensuring that there was nothing in place for African American children to continue their education. On November 11, 1955, the Gray Commission (named after State Senator Garland Gray) rolled out a phalanx of recommendations to keep Virginia's schools separate and unequal.

The Gray Commission's plan was put into action after a 1959 Fourth Circuit decision reversed a district court ruling that had given Prince Edward County a full seven years to comply with *Brown*. With the Fourth Circuit now ordering the schools to integrate by the fall of 1959, county supervisors immediately abolished the property tax that funded public schools and diverted the money into a cache for tuition grants to support the all-white Prince Edward Academy. The supervisors added their county funds to grants offered by the state to ensure that the costs for this private education were covered with public dollars. In addition, sixty-seven of the sixty-nine teachers at Prince Edward Academy were all from the now-closed public schools.

The defiance of Prince Edward County was singular—no other school system in the nation remained closed for five years (1959 to 1964) rather than comply with *Brown*. The impoverished but determined African American community managed to send some children away to relatives, but only thirty-five black students were able to attend those out-of-state schools on a full-time basis. During those five long years, critical in terms of child development,

most African American students spent their formative education time in activity centers that the black community cobbled together. ... The resources were simply not available to be open more than three days a week. ... These years had taken a great toll on the children.

Once again, black parents, with the determined Reverend L. Francis Griffin as the plaintiff, had to haul Virginia back to court. But as the *Washington Post* reported, when the lawsuits hit, Prince Edward County supervisors simply "denied that the Virginia constitution requires the operation of public schools in any county." Finally, cutting through that absurdity, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down two unequivocal decisions that forced the schools to reopen. Even then local and state authorities "employed every weapon in their arsenal to ensure that the newly reopened system remained segregated, impoverished and academically substandard." ... Stall and defy had transformed into stall and undermine, but the results were the same: devastating.

Prince Edward County is emblematic of the way that systematized racism not only destroys black lives but also undermines the very strength of the United States. Even as thousands of African American children were left behind educationally, the economy was beginning a seismic transformation that would require even more of its citizens. ... By the time Prince Edward County finally decided to implement at least parts of *Brown* in the 1970s, the heyday of industrial America, where gainful employment had not required a strong education—just a strong back—was already well over, with the knowledge-based economy taking hold. That economy was primed for those who had had the benefit of years of good schools and, in particular, for whites who had a well-funded public school system that went all the way through the

twelfth grade and graduated the lion's share of them as college-ready.

By contrast, an entire generation of black children who had fought long and hard to receive a quality education was now forced to face this cold, hard new economy with neither the necessary education nor work skills. It was not just black America, however, that suffered the cost of this waste of human lives and talent. The brutally relentless tactics of stall and defy, then stall and undermine—tactics that went on for at least four decades—left the United States with millions of citizens who lacked the education needed to be competitive in a global, technology-driven economy. This, in turn, left the United States lagging far behind other developed countries and placed the nation at enormous economic risk.

African Americans weren't the only ones who took a hit. The states of the Deep South, which fought *Brown* tooth and nail, today all fall in the bottom quartile of state rankings for educational attainment, per capita income, and quality of health. Prince Edward County, in particular, bears the scars of a place that saw fit to fight the Civil War right into the middle of the twentieth century. Certainly it is no accident that, in 2013, despite a knowledge-based, technology-driven global economy, the number one occupation in the county seat of Farmville was "cook and food preparation worker." Nor is it any accident that in 2013, while 9.9 percent of white households in the county made less than ten thousand dollars in annual income, fully 32.9 percent of black households fell below that threshold. The insistence on destroying *Brown*, and thus the viability of America's schools and the quality of education children receive regardless of where they live, has resulted in "the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession" for wide swaths of the American public. ♦

*Anderson is the Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor and chair of the Department of African American Studies at Emory University.*





# don't say Nothing

**SILENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES. OUR STUDENTS ARE LISTENING.**

BY **JAMILAH PITTS** ILLUSTRATION BY **ALEX WILLIAMSON**

**AS EDUCATORS** we (sometimes unknowingly) step into roles of advocate, caretaker, guide, and even mother or father to students. Students pay attention to everything we say and do. They particularly pay attention to our silence.

We may be uncomfortable talking about race, but we can no longer afford to be silent. We have chosen a profession, which—like parenting—requires that our comforts come second to those of children.

Many black and brown students are educated in school systems and classrooms where they, despite making up the racial majority, are taught how to understand a world by a staff comprised of a powerful minority. When their teachers choose to remain silent about moments of racial tension or violence—violence that may well touch students' own communities or families—these children are overtly reminded of their inferior place in society.

Even as a black teacher, I have to set a tone for my students that signals that it's safe to talk about race. Even with me, students of color are afraid to say the word *white* or to name the blatant racism of slavery and Jim Crow. If that's the case, imagine how much more difficult it is for them to engage in dialogue about mass incarceration rates; the militarism of police; the killing of innocent black men and women; cycles of poverty; the destruction of our bodies, minds and souls; the lack of access to healthy food and quality schools; and gentrification. These are all symptoms of a type of racism that remains deadly to this day because, despite bodies lying in the street, we refuse to talk about it.

White teachers must also broach these topics with white children attending white schools. These students *need* to learn about the destructive power of racism and brutality that have plagued our country for centu-

Begin by confronting your own biases—about yourself, your students, your fellow educators, the world. This process is essential; if educators don't do this, think about how much damage we could do to the open, vulnerable minds of our students. In particular, examine your feelings about the police. And, regardless of your personal feelings about law enforcement, it is critical to understand that many black and brown students have incredibly negative perceptions about the police. This difficult understanding on the part of teachers can hopefully lead to dialogue and healing in schools.

Once you've done the inner work of evaluating your own comfort levels and examining your biases, start the conversation. You might begin by admitting to students that—like them—you are scared, frustrated, angry, confused, hurt or uncomfortable. Students at any age understand these feelings and will appreciate

*Teaching as an act of resistance  
and teaching as an act of healing  
are not mutually exclusive.*

ries. They should also understand that Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and Trayvon Martin were preceded in death by Emmett Till, Jimmie Lee Jackson and countless others whose stories and deaths we must also teach. Our lack of instruction becomes deadly when we allow fear and discomfort to indirectly allow white students to labor under false, privileged assumptions.

Moreover, the silence on the part of white teachers who teach black and brown children is insulting. Imagine seeing white people, the perceived dominant race, loving and appreciating black culture when it is pretty—enjoying the music, food, culture and beauty of our people—but remaining silent about our oppression and refusing to see how the beauty of our culture was largely born out of necessity. It hurts students when their teachers only acknowledge what black people have done *for* this country and not what this country has done *to* them.

But how encouraging is it to know that we stand in a powerful and political position where we can directly influence and break this silence?

your humility, compassion and vulnerability, especially black and brown students. This is how you lay the foundation.

Next, you might begin to explain why you are feeling this way, although many students will already know why. And then, after you begin the conversation, step back, sit down and be quiet. Let your students lead. Let them speak and ask questions. Allow them, for once, the opportunity to be “in front” of what they are feeling rather than reacting to it.

I like to use the practice of a silent dialogue. During this year's recent killings, I opened with a question and placed large chart paper on the floor on which I wrote questions and asked students to respond silently (with the exception of clarifying questions or making sure that students were up-to-date on current events). I allowed students to express themselves freely and respond to each other on the paper. This is a tactic that may be helpful if you are truly uncomfortable and don't know where to begin.

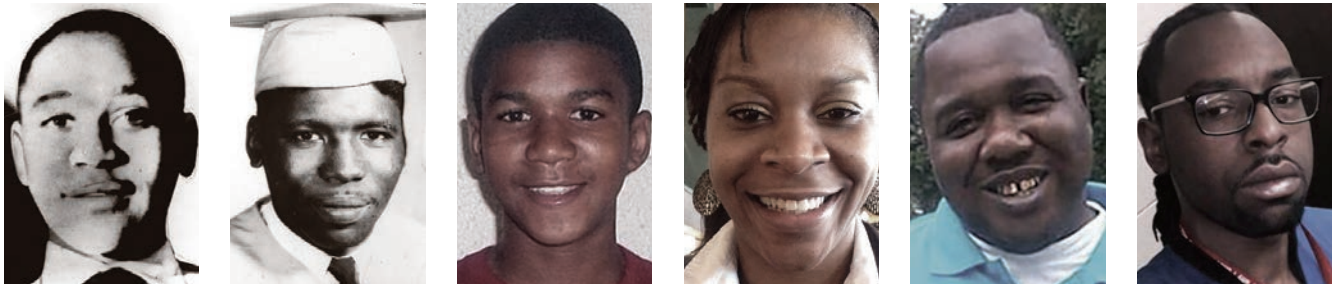
Some students wanted to discuss aloud, so we did. I jumped in only to guide or challenge statements that were not aiding the dialogue in a positive way, but I did this in a way that affirmed the students.

This is a beautiful practice. Students come into the classroom with ideas, hearts, passions, mindsets and understandings about their own humanity. They have been students of the news and their families' stories and experiences without you; they don't necessarily need you to understand certain aspects of the world. So if you feel that the conversation is too heavy or that the weight of having to end racism is in your lesson plan, humble yourself and relax. It isn't. Your students need you to allow them space, not to fix the world.

Literature teachers like myself have all the tools necessary to break the silence. Literature is about discussion, awareness and critical thinking. Writers

science was used to justify the myths that promoted black inferiority. This could be followed by a unit on the black scientists whose contributions have greatly advanced the field. Include the Tuskegee experiments and facts about Henrietta Lacks' death so that students understand that black bodies have too often been used, manipulated and destroyed.

Be on guard against false narratives about how all white people are bad or racists and all African Americans are saints or martyrs. We also cannot remain silent about incidents like the attacks on police in Dallas and Baton Rouge. Teach about the white people who marched with Dr. King and lift their voices in the Black Lives Matter movement today. Teach about white parents who cry out over the lives of slain black children as they would grieve for their own. This is essential if we are to allow our children, and our world, to heal.



throughout history have used their pens and pencils to challenge the very structures that still harm our students today. They have done the work for us. Choose a revolutionary book and *really* teach it. Create units around James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Michelle Alexander and Ta-Nehisi Coates, who, like Baldwin, forewarns all black sons of the dark hours that might soon overtake them.

History teachers, teach about what *actually* propelled and sustained the civil rights movement—how the boycotts hit white people in their pockets and black activists used the media to show the world the brutality of white supremacist police officers—as opposed to a simplified and erroneous account of a docile Rosa Parks who was simply too tired to give up her seat. Remind students that the outrage and outcry of Trayvon Martin's and Alton Sterling's families echo the cries of Emmett Till's mother whose screams exceeded grief, all of them revealing an acknowledgment that their loved ones had become martyrs.

Science teachers, have students research how

*From left to right: Emmett Till, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile*

Teaching as an act of resistance and teaching as an act of healing are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, learn from and for your students. Hear their needs, listen to their struggles—and don't shy away just because you may not understand them. Immerse yourself in literature that matters and that sharpens your zeal for human rights, social justice and teaching. Connect yourself with others who are doing this work.

And when you don't have the words and can't plan the lessons, don't just say nothing; say exactly what you are feeling. That will mean more to your students than you may ever know. ♦

*Pitts teaches high school English in Harlem, New York. She is also a graduate student at Teachers College of Columbia University.*



# The country's first inhabitants are the least likely to vote in national elections. Why?

BY DAVE CONSTANTIN ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER MARAVILLAS

Nicole Willis traces her inspiration to enter politics back to one galvanizing experience in high school. She was in government class, just before the 2000 presidential election, when the teacher administered an online quiz about political leaning. Willis was the only one of her Atlanta, Georgia, classmates whose results favored Al Gore instead of George W. Bush.

"I learned very quickly how deeply those thoughts ran in the region that I was in, and to keep my mouth shut," says Willis, who is—to her knowledge—the only American Indian to have been employed by two presidential campaigns. "I probably never would have gotten involved in politics had that experience not have happened, had I not felt so singled out for having a progressive view."

Willis, a member of the Umatilla tribe, learned to channel those dissenting views into action. She went on to help Barack Obama make important inroads with the Native community as his First Americans Vote deputy director during his 2008 presidential campaign. She did the same for U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders as the national tribal outreach director during his recent White House run, arranging a record number of meetings with tribal leaders and earning him accolades as a truly Native-friendly candidate.

"The Sanders team was just on the money," says Mark Trahan, an independent journalist and professor of journalism at the University of North

Dakota, whose blog, Trahan Reports, chronicles Native voting across the country. "They had a [Native] person on staff who was identifiable, who had access, who everybody knew."

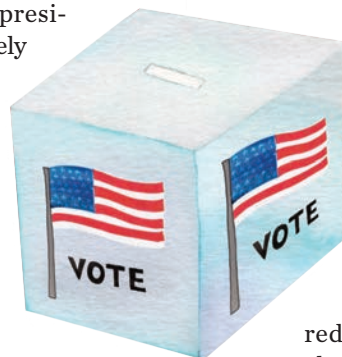
Willis' visibility in presidential politics is relatively rare. American Indians are one of the most underrepresented groups in politics, and they vote at a lower rate than any other demographic in state and national elections.

But that doesn't mean American Indians don't vote.

"It is not unheard of for tribal elections to pull 60 to 80 percent of voters, but it is unheard of for national and state elections to pull 30 percent of Indian voters," says Dean Chavers, co-chair of First Americans for Hillary and director of Catching the Dream, an organization that offers scholarships to Native students. Chavers, a Lumbee Indian from New Mexico, has written books and dozens of articles on Native education

and voting-rights issues. "Basically, we're looking at about a 15 percent voter-registration rate in Indian country," he says. "It has not changed in the last 50 years. So that's a big problem."

Chavers believes strongly that Native voters face some of the staunchest barriers to voting of any demographic group. When you consider arcane voter-ID laws, language barriers, early voting limitations, redistricting, a lack of outreach and education, and even well-documented cases of outright voter intimidation and suppression, it's hard to argue with that assessment. "There are all kinds of mechanisms in place to keep the Indian vote down, and it's working," Chavers says. "South Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Wyoming, Minnesota—all those states are very anti-Indian in terms of voting, so they won't let roving registrars [mobile registration units] ... go and register Indians."



**NATIVE AMERICAN OR AMERICAN INDIAN?** People who are indigenous to the land that is now the United States use both terms, but not everyone is comfortable with both. Teaching Tolerance recognizes the limitations of these identifiers. We use tribal names whenever possible, but—when writing more generally—have opted to use the noun *American Indian* and the modifier *Native* based on the recommendations of our advisors who identify as members of this diverse group.

This means some reservation residents have to drive an hour or longer to register, and success is not guaranteed. One issue is that reservations often don't use traditional street addresses, which can cause problems with voter-registration databases. "Your address isn't 123 Southern Road, Highway 85. It's 'one mile past mile marker three,'" explains Patty Ferguson-Bohnee, director of the Indian Legal Program at Arizona State University (ASU). "In the last presidential election we had a lot of problems in Pinal County, where they were turning people away because they said their IDs didn't match."

Ferguson-Bohnee also serves as the Native Vote Election Protection coordinator for the state of Arizona, training lawyers and law students at ASU to help Native voters navigate the red tape and ensure their rights aren't being violated. Legal challenges to Native voter suppression have been on the rise in recent years, with lawsuits popping up in Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Arizona, among other states. Many of these legal actions were driven by a 2013 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that invalidated the section of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that provided federal oversight in districts with histories of voter suppression. The weakening of the Act disproportionately affected Native voters.

## **"But I Don't Teach Native Students ..."**

Voting and civic engagement are central to social studies instruction. To tell a complete story about voting in the United States, educators must teach about who got the vote and when, as well as obstacles to voting, both historical and current. As the last group to gain voting rights and as a population still fighting for full enfranchisement, American Indians must be included as part of this instruction.

With a 5.3 percent Native population and 22 different tribes, Arizona is a key state of focus for Native Vote, a nonpartisan campaign spearheaded by the National Congress of American Indians. Native Vote works with local coordinators, educators and lawyers like Ferguson-Bohnee to maximize Native attendance at the polls. The organizers at Native Vote recognize that the 18–24 age group is key in achieving political shifts that benefit American Indians. They're focusing their social media presence and campus volunteer efforts on American Indian youth and young adults, groups that are more likely to engage in national politics than their parents' generation.

Glennas'ba Augborne is a Navajo Indian and a 2016 graduate of the Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law at ASU. A volunteer during Arizona's 2014 midterm elections, Augborne says she became interested in voter law and outreach because of her mother's strong anti-voting stance. She attributes her mother's unwillingness to engage in mainstream politics to two things: one, growing up after the boarding school era, during which many Indian children attended government schools that forcibly assimilated them to European-American culture; and two, a long, painful national history of American Indians being denied basic civil rights. "I wanted my mother to vote, but seeing her be so against it definitely struck something within me," Augborne says. "It made me want to engage others, on and off the reservation, to understand that this is a right we need to engage in; and however we need to do that, we need act so we count."

It's a sad irony that the country's first inhabitants were the last to be afforded

### **GOOD NEWS FOR NATIVE VOTERS IN NORTH DAKOTA!**

As of August 2016, a strict voter ID law was struck down for placing an "undue burden" on American Indians, who make up 25 percent of the state's electorate.

the right to vote. But Augborne sees the legacy of governmental oppression that infuriates older generations as fuel for civic engagement.

"We're considered wards of the United States to this day. We are separate sovereigns; we have quote-unquote 'benefits.' However, a lot of that is dictated by the laws and regulations mandated 'for us' by the federal government," she says. "Native people should become more involved, in this election now more than ever. We have an obligation to make sure our voices are heard."

If home isn't where these conversations are taking place, they need to happen in the classroom, as was the case for Willis. For educators who work with Native students, this means planning explicit instruction about voting rights and the power of voting; staying informed and offering education about ballot initiatives and candidate platforms relevant to Native voters; engaging tribal leaders in civic education efforts; networking with Native Vote and other organizations; and offering school-based voter registration.

"We have a dearth of voters who really understand how voting works and how elections work," says Willis, "so that's something that's certainly important for everybody to learn, because we need more voters. I could see how, in some racially charged locations, it might be more difficult to speak out, but I also think it's something that's hugely motivating to young people because young people, more than anyone, understand that diversity is a value and something that should be celebrated and embraced." ♦

*Constantin is a copywriter and editor in San Jose, California.*



A stylized illustration of a person walking towards a bright sun with rays, symbolizing a path to adulthood. The sun is a bright yellow circle at the top center, with thick, dark orange rays radiating outwards. The background is a light yellow color with a textured, paper-like appearance. A small blue silhouette of a person with a backpack is walking away from the sun, leaving a long, dark orange shadow behind them. The overall composition is simple and symbolic, representing the journey of a senior year.

# PATHWAYS TO ADULTHOOD

DARE TO DREAM BIG ABOUT  
WHAT SENIOR YEAR COULD BE.

BY JEREMY KNOLL ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD MIA

### I REMEMBER BUILDING WINDING

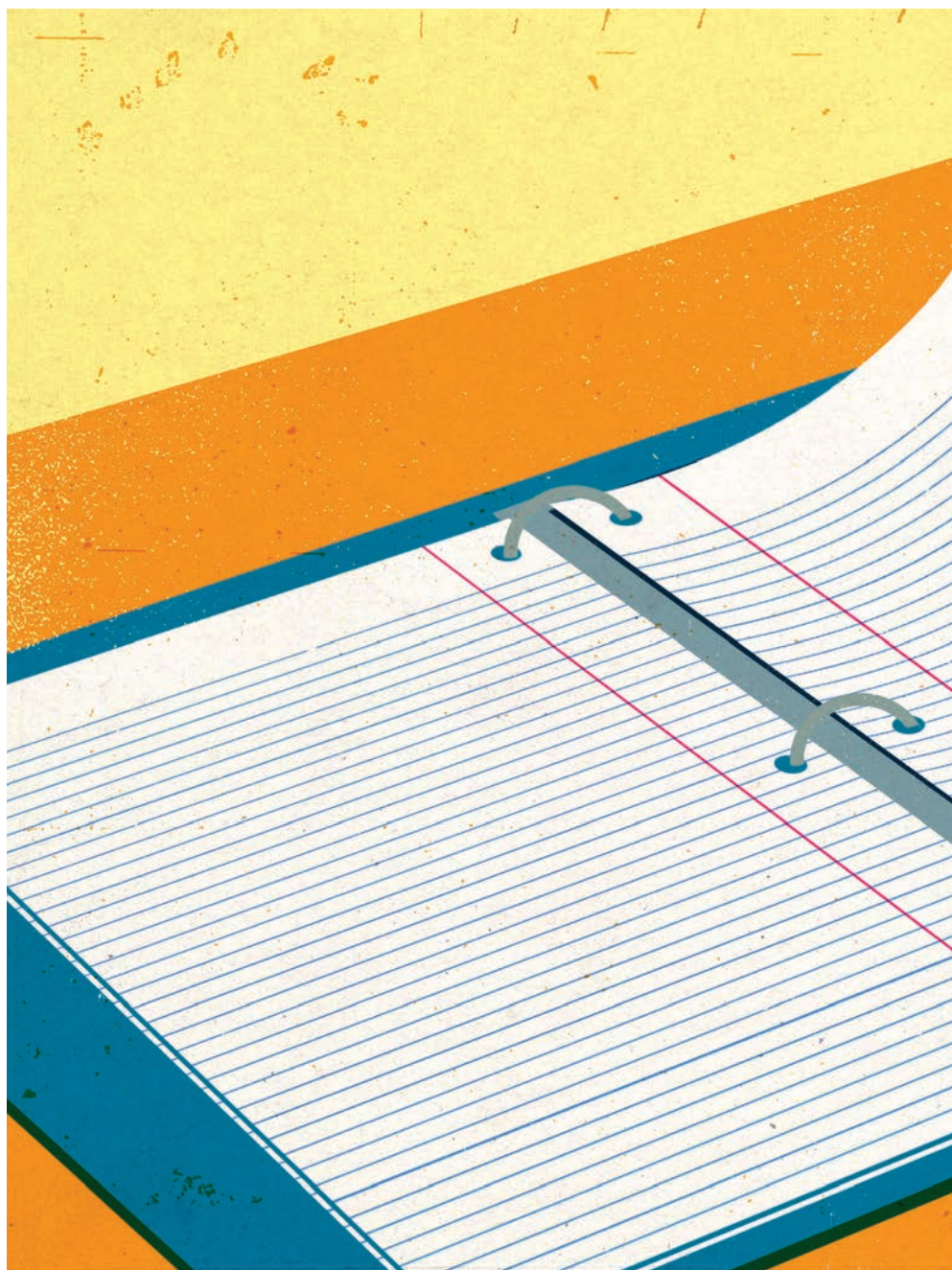
pathways around my house as a kid. I used everything I could get my hands on: from trash cans to tablecloths, hula hoops to hockey pucks. Sometimes alone, sometimes with friends, I would dedicate whole afternoons to building the most random routes I could conceive. The pathways did not lead anywhere. They were simply a means of passing the time.

At many high schools across the country, senior year is the academic equivalent of one of my childhood pathways. Under the guise of curricula, we set up a few hoops for students to jump through, but nothing resembling a cohesive experience that leads in a definitive direction. In the name of education, we allow students to simply pass time. In doing so, we lose the opportunity to prepare these emerging adults to become the best citizens they can be.

### Senior Year: Past and Present

Six years ago, Walter Kirn wrote a piece for *The New York Times Magazine* titled “Class Dismissed.” In it, he bemoans a senior year of high school that is “less a climatic academic experience than an occasion for oafish goofing off, chronic truancy, random bullying, [and] sloppy dancing.” He goes on to say that “seniors rule” not because they have done anything significant, but rather because “it’s tradition, and seniors crave tradition. They crave it because they know, deep down, they’re lost, and tradition helps them hide this fear.”

His accusation—that senior year was simply a holding pattern that



encouraged sloth and academic atrophy—made me take a good hard look at my 12th-grade English students. *They are lost*, I thought. I was lost when I was a senior. I did not know what I stood for or believed in. I did not know how I felt about the social issues facing my community or my country or my world. My K–12 education did precious little to teach me about self-reflection or agency.

### What Senior Year Could Be

By allowing senior year to remain a blow-off year, we are missing an opportunity to help students navigate the transformation from high school student to full-fledged members of society. We are also missing an opportunity to create a more just world.

For many students, leaving high school offers the unique opportunity to redefine themselves. Even if they aren’t





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Seniors *want* to talk about tough issues. They *want* to have their beliefs challenged and debate with their peers. They just need fuel to ignite the glowing embers burning in their chests.

#### Ask Students About Themselves

Not enough students from inner-city schools are given internships at prestigious law firms and investment banks. Not enough students driving BMWs to school are aware that some kids attend elementary schools with crumbling ceiling tiles. Regardless of whether we, as educators, can succeed at making the huge systemic changes necessary to level these inequities, we can do a lot with just the written and spoken word.

moving to a new community, they will most likely be surrounded by a different cohort of people who don't have preconceived expectations about who they are. They have the chance to review the details of their first 18 years and decide what to keep and what to toss. If we want to prepare thoughtful citizens, we must support this process.

Do our seniors have an opportunity to practice self-reflection and

self-assessment? Do you ask them to think about how their race, gender or family income opened or closed doors for them? Do they have opportunities to ponder whether fairness and ethics are more important than profit margins? Do they understand the difference between inequality and inequity? As guides, teachers need to keep pointing to and questioning life beyond the classroom walls.

English classes, especially during senior year, have the ability to transcend boundaries dictated by curricula. College admission essays are a good place to start the process of self-discovery that should be the foundation of senior year. One of the questions for the 2016 Common Application asked students to reflect on aspects of their “background, identity, interest or talent” that set them apart. Having students write about themselves, coupled with peer editing, can open their eyes. Suddenly, they see themselves as agents within society, or they see peers in a totally different light. From that moment, a teacher can lead the conversation to how little we know about the people we interact with each day, the judgments we make without facts and how we can work to better understand the people around us.

Another application prompt asks students to write about “a time when [they] challenged a belief or idea.” This offers a great starting point for potentially life-altering conversations. Students can gain strength from hearing others’ stories of standing up for or against an idea they felt was wrong. Those who may never have done such a thing are forced to ask themselves, “Why?” Some may even walk out of class scanning the halls for an opportunity to practice giving voice to their own convictions.

### Ask Students Difficult Questions

What is education? What is purpose? What is fairness? What is poverty? These are questions I was asked when I was a senior in high school in a series of “personal definition papers.” I use the same questions now with my students.

While, academically, these writing exercises focus on writing concisely, using vivid examples to illustrate central claims and explaining complex ideas in few words, these are not the skills that matter most. What matters most is students’ abilities to decide where they stand. Asking students about education, fairness and poverty requires them to confront the inequities at the foundation of our public school system. The paper might prompt them, for example, to ask how a student from a school that is poorly funded or inadequately staffed is expected to compete with a student from a school funded by a reliable budget and staffed by professionals with master’s degrees. For students from low-income schools, this question may highlight realities they are all too aware of but don’t necessarily know how to address. For more affluent students, it may be the first time they’ve considered this type of inequity.

Writing about fairness forces students to look back at years of hallway interactions, news headlines and family dinner conversations and to develop their opinions independently. By analyzing the injustices around them, many realize they want to challenge the status quo rather than tolerate it, ignore it or actively support it.

### Ask Students to Share Their Voices

For my students, senior year now ends with 10-minute commencement speeches delivered formally in front of the class and any other people the students care to invite. The task is simple: Share what they have learned from their education so far. Students must mine the depths of their experience for moments when they have learned

something about strength, integrity or grace.

These speeches serve multiple purposes. They force students to move past their objections that, at their age, they don’t have anything to teach anyone. They challenge the cozy stereotypes we all use as tools to navigate and simplify the world we live in. Students talk about the struggle of quitting baseball despite a father’s angry objection, about battling eating disorders and drug addictions, about losing parents. They talk about bullying and coming out and devotion to God. They talk about all different aspects of their 18 years, and in the process shock themselves and their classmates.

It all comes from self-reflection and open conversation. It all leads to students better prepared to contribute to a world with less hatred and greater understanding.

### Offer Challenges, Not Hoops

I am all for pushing students to excel academically, but let’s make sure that effort is focused on challenges rather than arbitrary obstacles, on character development rather than box-checking. The tasks of senior year need to be more than the disconnected pathways I laid out in my yard all those years ago. This, of all years, needs cohesion; there needs to be a point.

What better thematic thread to weave over the course of their culminating high school year than an exploration of self? ♦

*Knoll is a writer and public school educator in New Jersey. He also blogs for Teaching Tolerance.*



# And the Winners Are ...

2016

TEACHING TOLERANCE AWARD

EXCELLENCE  
IN TEACHING

## Meet the recipients of the 2016 Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching.

BY JOANNA WILLIAMS

**TEACHERS ARE NOT** only tasked with the responsibility of preparing their students for the world, but also with preparing them to make the world better. The recipients of the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching meet this challenge by bringing social justice into the classroom every day. Whether teaching second grade or high school science, these innovative educators connect with and inspire students through culturally responsive pedagogy, social emotional learning and academic rigor.

Without further ado, meet the five winners of the 2016 Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching, introduced in the words of their students.



HENRY CODY MILLER

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School • Gainesville, Florida

STUDENTS SPEAK ...

**"IF I WERE TO DESCRIBE MR. MILLER IN ONE WORD IT WOULD BE WOKE."**

As a ninth-grade English language arts teacher, Henry Cody Miller uses a windows-and-mirrors approach to his instruction, making sure all students in his class see themselves in the books they read and have opportunities to see the realities of other people's lives. Miller also co-constructs the curriculum with his students, allowing them to suggest texts and books that interest them. "I believe the curriculum has to be a living, breathing entity, and I think it has to be made with teachers *and* students in mind," he says.

In addition to his teaching, which focuses largely on multicultural literature, he co-sponsors the "Decolonizing Club," a venue for students to discuss how colonialism has influenced their identities. He also leads school-wide professional development on creating inclusive spaces and curricula for LGBTQ students. Miller is currently pursuing his doctorate in English education at the University of Florida.



KAREN SCHREINER

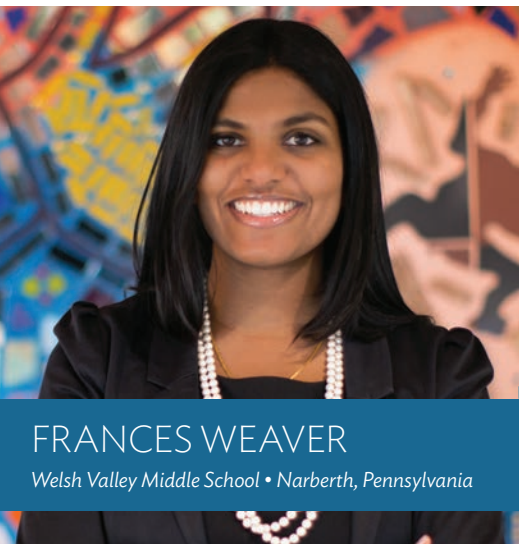
Aspire Monarch Academy • Oakland, California

STUDENTS SPEAK ...

**"IF I COULD CHOOSE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE MS. SCHREINER, IT WOULD BE THAT SHE IS COMMITTED."**

The city of Oakland's activist roots run deep within Karen Schreiner and her classroom teaching. An equity-focused second-grade educator with a vocal commitment to racial equality, Schreiner sees social justice teaching as essential in early childhood education. Using that belief, she developed a K-3 literacy-based anti-bias curriculum that strengthens students' social emotional skills, sharpens their sense of fairness and justice, and challenges them to engage in purposeful social activism and create change in their communities.

To maximize her students' awareness of inequality and identity, Schreiner couples her curriculum with the K-2 standards in each of Teaching Tolerance's anti-bias domains: Identify, Diversity, Justice and Action. She also uses the Black Lives Matter movement to help her second-graders learn about why people protest. "It's my job to present my students with different perspectives of history and not have just one particular lens," she says. "And it's very hard because [my students are] 6 and 7 years old, but I think it's possible to do this in a developmentally appropriate way."



FRANCES WEAVER

Welsh Valley Middle School • Narberth, Pennsylvania

STUDENTS SPEAK ...

**“ONE WORD I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MRS. WEAVER IS CREATIVE. SHE HAS ALL THESE DIFFERENT WAYS TO TEACH SOCIAL STUDIES THAT I REALLY LIKE.”**

Frances Weaver vibrates with enthusiasm for teaching, so it’s no surprise her eighth-grade students find her classes thought-provoking. The innovative social studies teacher asks her students to connect modern moments to moments in history using inquiry and research. This approach fosters skills her students need to identify historical patterns and to advocate for justice throughout their lives. “I don’t want my students to feel like I know everything,” Weaver says. “I want us to have a shared dialogue where we figure it out, where we read multiple sources, where we piece together the different parts of history to make it a whole picture.”

Weaver uses academic rigor and culturally proficient lesson planning to help deconstruct biases and to close achievement gaps—priorities she has focused on since she first launched her teaching career. At the center of all her work are respect, acceptance and the celebration of diversity. Weaver says, “Conversations at the dinner table are changing in Lower Merion because of my students.”



CHRISTOPHER WIDMAIER

World of Inquiry School #58 • Rochester, New York

STUDENTS SPEAK ...

**“HE DOESN’T SEE US JUST AS STUDENTS; HE SEES US AS THE NEXT GENERATION OF ADULTS WHO’S GOING TO TAKE ON THE WORLD.”**

Science instruction isn’t always viewed as an opportunity to further anti-bias education, but Christopher Widmaier builds social justice directly into his high school science curriculum. “Science and math have been used over time to perpetuate injustices, so I think we need to acknowledge that and look at what biases lead to that,” he says. “And then, at the same time, look at science and math in their pure form as they’re intended to be; they’re intended for us to be ways to uncover deeper truths.”

Widmaier holds multiple leadership roles at his school and is a founding member of the Rochester Regional Teacher Empowerment Network. An advocate of outdoor learning, Widmaier has taken hundreds of students out of the classroom and into their communities and even to national parks as part of his instruction. He also founded and coaches a school swim team that has been recognized not only for athletic excellence but also for inclusion and sportspersonship.



LESLIE WILLS-TAYLOR

Woodbrook Elementary • Charlottesville, Virginia

STUDENTS SPEAK ...

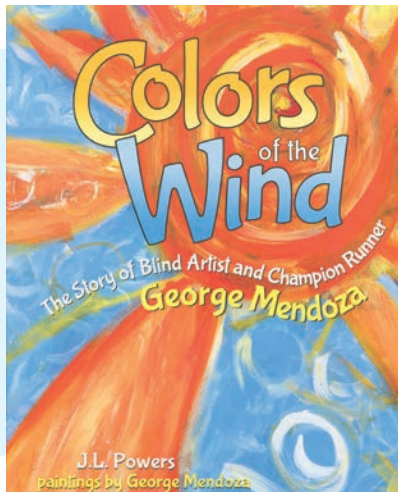
**“IF I COULD DESCRIBE MRS. WILLS ONE WAY, I WOULD DESCRIBE HER AS ADVENTUROUS.”**

Leslie Wills-Taylor considers herself not only a teacher but also an advocate who supports each student at an individual level. Family engagement is paramount in her fourth-grade classroom. “My families have an open invitation to come into the classroom and share what’s valuable to them. That allows students to see parents as experts on their own culture,” she said. She uses Teaching Tolerance lesson plans to build her students’ vocabularies around social justice topics and to shape a classroom community based on respect.

In addition to her classroom duties, Wills-Taylor also serves her school as a diversity resource teacher. She shares current research, organizes reading groups and supports her fellow teachers in piloting culturally responsive teaching strategies designed to engage high-needs students. She also organizes family and community outreach events, which include a back-to-school neighborhood meet-and-greet and the Martin Luther King Jr. Walk-a-Mile for a Cause. At the district level, Wills-Taylor offers research-based professional development to her K–12 colleagues.

# What We're Reading

Teaching Tolerance loves to read! Check out a few of our favorite diverse books for diverse readers and educators.

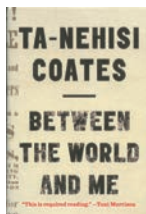


As a child, George Mendoza dreamed of becoming an athlete, but when he was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease at age 15, George wondered if his dream was possible. *Colors of the Wind* shows how George overcame his fears and set the world record in the mile for blind runners. Along the way, George also discovered his talent for painting and became a world-renowned artist.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

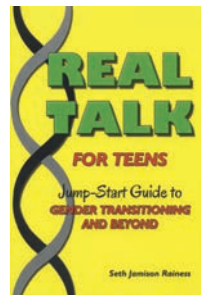
*“Mendoza’s story and artwork will help students believe that anything is possible.”*

—Jarah Botello



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

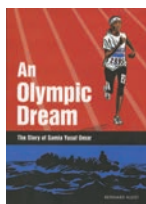


*Real Talk For Teens: Jump-Start Guide to Gender Transitioning and Beyond* is told from the perspective of author Seth Jamison Rainess, a motivational speaker and educator who transitioned later in life. This powerful book offers transgender teens and their families, teachers and friends suggestions for navigating transitions in a safe, healthy and inclusive way.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

*“Firsthand, realistic and critical advice for varying stages of gender reassignment.”*

—Sara Wicht



## MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

*An Olympic Dream: The Story of Samia Yusuf Omar* by Reinhard Kleist



The opening of *March: Book Three* casts readers as participants in the tense, nightmarish scenes surrounding the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. From there, the emotional intensity never lets up. In the third and final installment of his graphic memoir, Congressman John Lewis recounts the thoughts, fears, conflicts, inspirations and triumphs that carried him through the history-making months between the bombing and the multiple attempts to complete the Selma-to-Montgomery March, concluding with “the last day of the movement as I knew it.” In a season when voting is on everyone’s mind, *March: Book Three* (co-authored by Andrew Aydin and illustrated by Nate Powell) beautifully captures the extreme sacrifices the foot soldiers of the movement made to secure this sacred right for all Americans.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

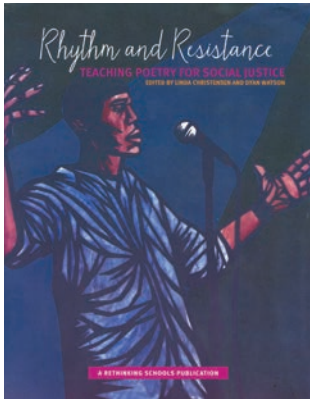
*“March: Book Three completes a must-read trilogy for any middle or high school classroom focused on racial justice, citizenship and personal agency.”*

—Adrienne van der Valk



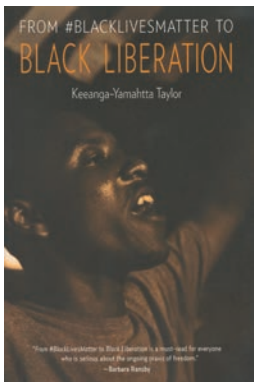
## ELEMENTARY

*Rad American Women A-Z* by Kate Schatz, illustrated by Miriam Klein Stahl



**“Underscores the power of poetry to spotlight issues of injustice and to promote empathy and community.”**

—Monita K. Bell



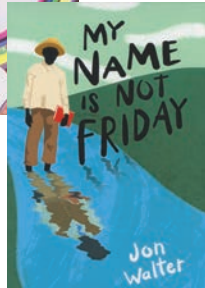
**“The kind of intersectional writing on race, capitalism and freedom that has been missing in our conversations about today’s movement for black lives.”**

—Joanna Williams



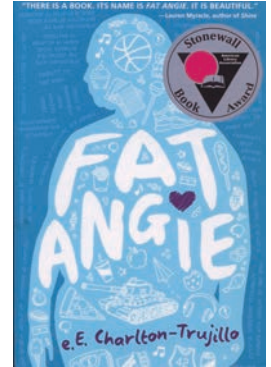
**“An inspiring tale of youth action to preserve traditions and conserve the environment.”**

—Margaret Sasser



**“An unflinching look at slavery from a young person’s perspective.”**

—Steffany Moyer



**“One word to describe this book is AMAZING.”**

—Cecile Jones

If you desire to create a classroom environment that honors students’ intersectional identities and highlights pertinent social issues, *Rethinking Schools’ Rhythm and Resistance: Teaching Poetry for Social Justice* is your guide. Edited by Linda Christensen and Dyan Watson, this volume emphasizes poetry as a medium that can get students to write with honesty, passion and vigor that aren’t always on display in the essay form. The introductions on poetic themes, considerations of classroom approaches and sample pieces by students, teachers and other published authors make this an impressive teaching tool.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Every winter, a decreasing number of black-necked cranes, or *trung trung*, migrate to Bhutan’s wetlands, where caretakers watch over them. In *Crane Boy*, written by Diana Cohn and illustrated by Youme Landowne, a boy named Kinga decides to take action to protect and celebrate these special, ancient figures in Bhutanese culture. With the help of a group of monks, Kinga organizes a Crane Festival—complete with a new crane dance, silk costumes and masks—to save the cranes.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In *My Name Is Not Friday*, Jon Walter tells the story of Samuel, an orphaned boy who is sold into slavery during the Civil War and forced to take on the name “Friday.” Samuel struggles to hold onto his identity, marked

by education, religion and his love for his brother, even after his name and freedom are taken from him. This stirring novel astutely conveys the abuses of slavery alongside the efforts of enslaved people to build community in the harshest of conditions.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Fat Angie* by e.E. Charlton-Trujillo is a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl who’s bullied for keeping to herself, being quiet and being obese. After her sister becomes a prisoner of war, Angie goes into a state of depression, becoming a loner. Angie also struggles with a brother who bullies her at home and at school and a mother who shames her for her weight. Eventually, Angie begins to heal from her emotional wounds through the one thing that makes her feel good: running.

HIGH SCHOOL

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor is bracing with her truths. In *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, she holds nothing back in her airtight analysis of structural inequality, racism, mass incarceration and the current movement for black lives. She tackles everything from President Obama’s policies and their effects on black Americans to the persistent consequences of institutional racism and why change in the United States has remained stagnant. If your interests lie in justice and equality, this is a must-read.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# What We're Watching

Dim the lights and get ready to learn with these TT-approved films!

The Whiteness Project's latest installment, "**Intersection of I**," is a collection of 23 one-minute videos in which white millennials in Dallas, Texas, discuss how they perceive, value and engage with their whiteness. The diversity of voices presented in these videos shuts down the misconception that white people are a monolithic group (a misconception that plagues most racial groups), and offers great fodder for classroom discussion. Participants share a wide range of perspectives on race, history, privilege, religion and more, highlighting each person's intersectional identities and including some biased views that educators would do well to raise with students. (1 min. each)

[whitenessproject.org](http://whitenessproject.org)  
HIGH SCHOOL

**The Mask You Live In** explores the damage that rigid definitions of maleness can inflict on boys and young men. In this documentary, writer, director and producer Jennifer Siebel Newsom emphasizes how expecting boys and men to be "tough" not only wreaks emotional havoc on them, but can actually perpetuate oppression against girls and women. Multiple speakers in the

film address the desperate need for a new narrative, one that counters the damaging messages boys hear from their families, classmates and the media about what it means to be male. **The Mask You Live In** also highlights the importance of male role models who live the message, "There's more than one way to be a man." (90 min.)

[therepresentationproject.org/film/the-mask-you-live-in](http://therepresentationproject.org/film/the-mask-you-live-in)

HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

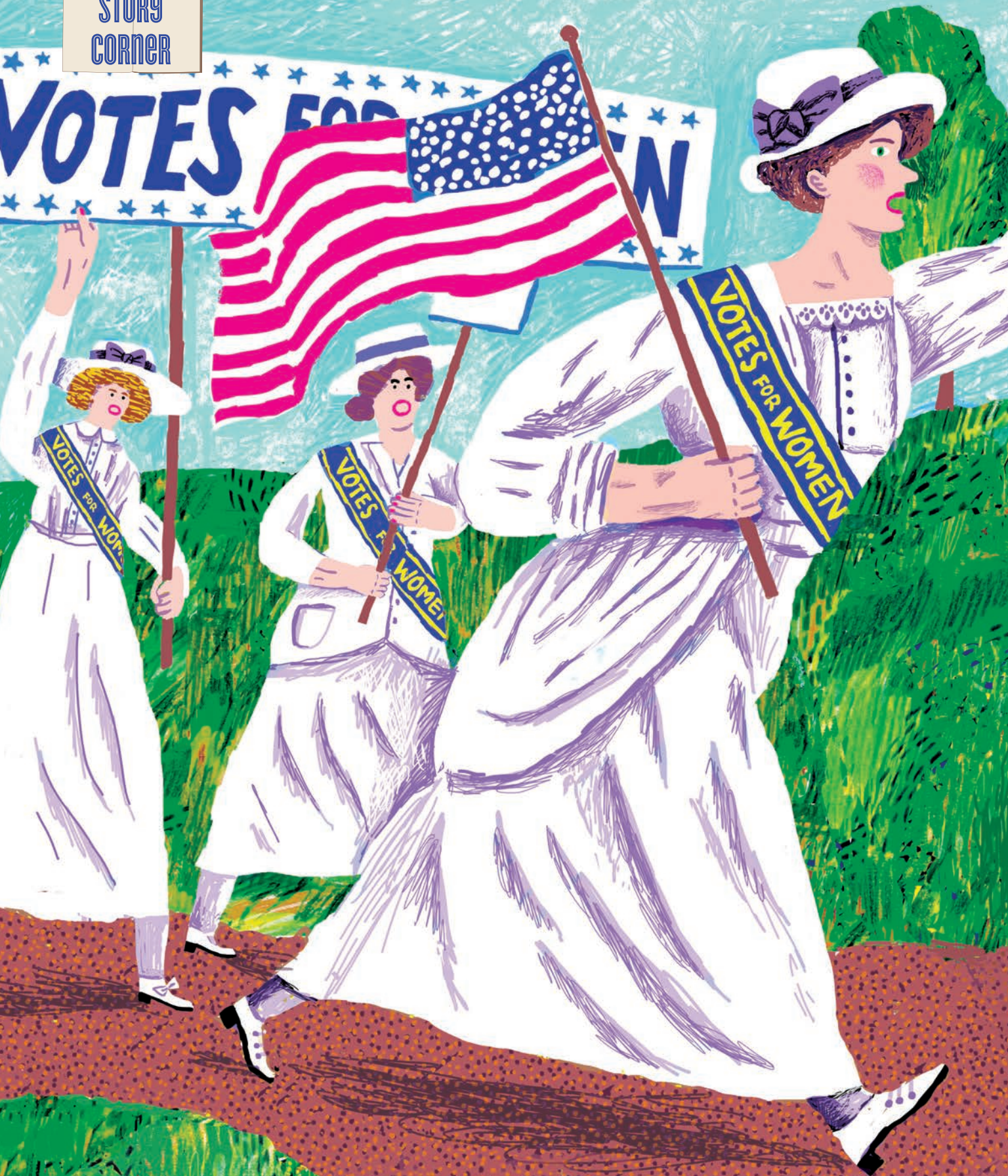
**Humanizing America**, a series of documentary shorts by the Futuro Media Group, "investigates how the nation's changing demographics are impacting the 2016 election." Hosted by journalist Maria Hinojosa, this series spotlights people from diverse identities, experiences and perspectives: a mixed-status Asian family, a senior community activist, an American-Muslim organizer and more. In the classroom, viewing **Humanizing America** episodes can foster engagement and learning about the 2016 election and electorate. (5 min. each)

[humanizingamerica.org](http://humanizingamerica.org)  
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

*Editor's note: Want more election coverage from Maria Hinojosa? Be sure to check out the America by the Numbers with Maria Hinojosa election special, "The New Deciders." This episode examines the influence of voters from four demographic groups—Arab Americans, black millennials, Latinx Evangelicals and Asian Americans. Find more information at [americabythenumbers.org](http://americabythenumbers.org).*

Disney's **Zootopia** is a timely lesson in inclusivity. This animated movie takes place in a spectacular, multi-habitat city where predator and prey live in peace. Judy Hopps, a rabbit who has dreamed of entering law enforcement from a young age, becomes the first rabbit to graduate from the police academy. She is determined to prove that, no matter what kind of animal you are, you can be anything you want to be. Despite confronting many setbacks and stereotypes, Judy works to crack a case and makes friends with some unlikely characters. Packed with fun and messages of inclusion, **Zootopia** is a great resource for the elementary classroom! (108 min.)

[movies.disney.com/zootopia](http://movies.disney.com/zootopia)  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL







# Be a Good Boy

BY JOHN MICKLOS JR.

August 18, 1920. Harry Burn fidgeted in his seat in the Tennessee House of Representatives. He touched the red rose on his lapel. Wearing that rose showed that he was against giving women the right to vote. Supporters of women’s voting rights—or suffrage—wore yellow roses. In Tennessee, the struggle for women’s suffrage became known as the War of the Roses.

Burn reached inside his jacket and touched the letter he had just received from his mother urging her son to “be a good boy” and “vote for suffrage.” What should he do?

Many states had already passed the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women across the country the right to vote. Only one more state was needed to ratify the amendment. Tennessee became the final battleground.

The Tennessee Senate quickly approved the 19th Amendment, and it was up to the House to vote yes or no. No one knew what would happen: 48 members of the House were for the amendment and 48 were opposed. A tie vote was a no. People from across the nation—both for and against women’s suffrage—filled the room. They waited silently as each representative called out his vote.

Sweat poured down Burn’s face. At age 24, he was the state’s youngest representative. Yet soon his vote might affect the entire nation.

Thoughts raced through his head: *Many people don’t think women should vote, but women work as hard as men. Why shouldn’t they have the same rights? My mother knows more about politics than most men.*

*She should be allowed to vote. I know I should support women’s suffrage. But what will other people think?*

Burn’s name was called. The moment had come. Burn paused for just an instant. His mother’s words ran through his mind: “Be a good boy; vote for suffrage.” Burn raised his hand. “Yea,” he said. The amendment now had enough votes to pass. Women had won the right to vote!

Supporters cheered. Opponents of women’s suffrage were angry. Why had Burn changed his vote? Afraid, Burn ran from the room. He thought the angry anti-suffragists might hurt him. He climbed up into the attic of the state Capitol and waited for people to calm down.

The next day, Burn addressed the legislature. He calmly defended his decision to change his vote. He said it was his chance “to free 17 million women from political slavery” and that “a mother’s advice is always safest for a boy to follow.” He will always be known as the person who cast the deciding vote for women’s suffrage. ♦

**EDITOR’S NOTE** *This story originally appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of Teaching Tolerance.*

## Questions for Readers

### RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)

Why did Burn’s mother write him a letter?

### THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)

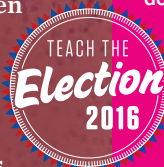
Did any female representatives participate in the vote for women’s suffrage? How do you know?

### AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)

Why does Burn’s mother use the phrase “be a good boy” in her letter?

### ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)

Burn had a difficult decision to make. Describe a time when you were faced with a difficult decision. How did you decide?

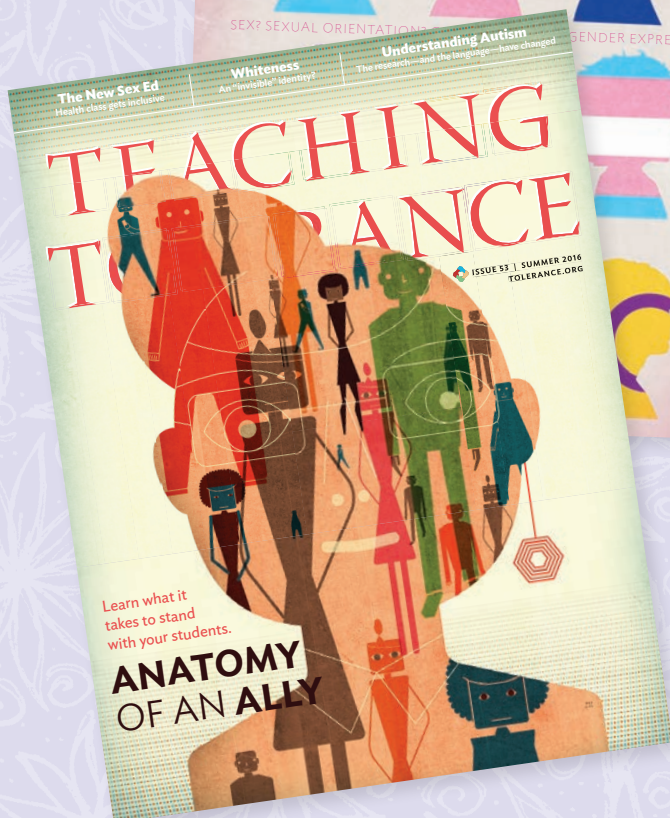
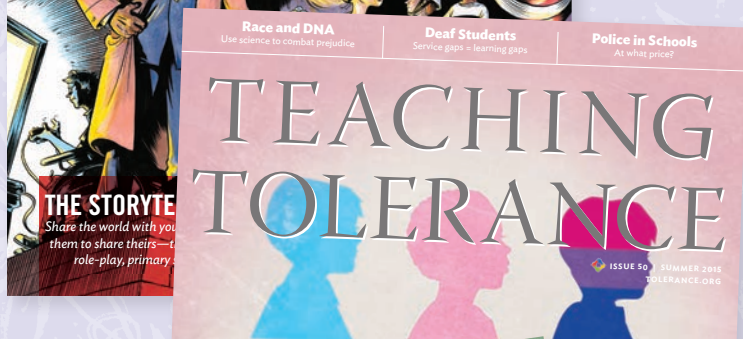
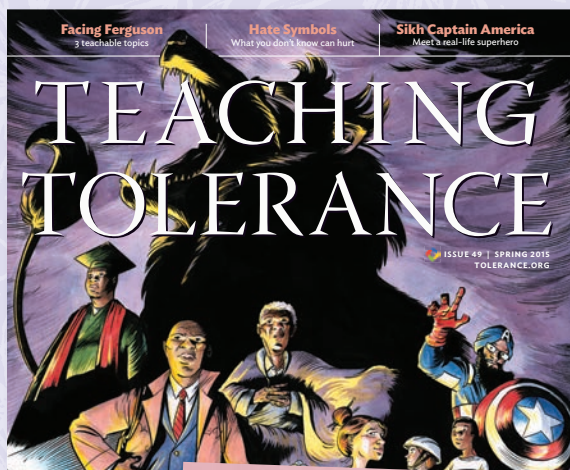




This quote is the final line of the poem “I, Too” by Langston Hughes (1902-1967), an African-American poet, novelist and playwright. The speaker in the poem envisions the end of racial oppression, confident that—one day—he will be recognized for the strong, beautiful person he is.



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A NEW FILM KIT AND VIEWER'S GUIDE FROM TEACHING TOLERANCE

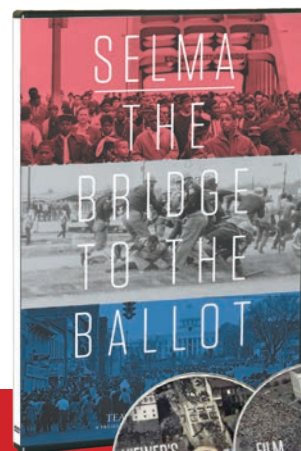
# SELMA: THE BRIDGE TO THE BALLOT

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- ➔ An illustrated map with locations significant to the voting rights struggle



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