



PUBLIC EDUCATION PARTNERS
2021 GREENVILLE COMMUNITY READ
STUDY GUIDE

TEACHING WHEN THE WORLD IS ON FIRE

ANTHOLOGY EDITED BY LISA DELPIT

As public education becomes another setting for the culture wars in America, it is incumbent upon all public education advocates to dig into the issues, discern fact over fiction, and think critically about what support children need to learn and thrive in a complex and diverse society.

From voucher schemes that pull money from our public schools; to bans on culturally relevant curriculum that provide a more accurate view of our history; to attacks on transgender students that couch discrimination in the name of fairness; to open hostility towards educators who have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of extraordinary challenges—champions of public education need compelling, data-driven, and student-focused defenses for their commitment to equity. Additionally, this highly polarized moment requires educators to find new ways to teach across difference without compromising truth.

To this end, Public Education Partners of Greenville County presents our 2nd Annual Greenville Community Read. This year, we will read selected essays from Lisa Delpit's anthology *Teaching When the World is on Fire*. In these pages we hope you find fuel for study and thought and good conversation, and the conviction to recommit to and champion shared values in a divisive time.



THE GCR

The Greenville Community Read (GCR), sponsored by Public Education Partners of Greenville County, is a summer book club for the Greenville County community. The goal of the GCR is to cultivate community-wide discussion and reflection around important issues related to public education and equity.

ABOUT PEP

OUR MISSION

Public Education Partners of Greenville County leads our community in acting collectively to support, strengthen and advance public education and student achievement in Greenville County Schools.

Our mission is based on five foundational beliefs:

- Public education is fundamental to a democratic, civil and prosperous society.
- Public schools are critical institutions for breaking the cycle of poverty and redressing social inequities.
- Public education is a critical lever for community prosperity and vitality.
- Education reform must be systematic and engage multiple stakeholders to be effective.
- Public engagement, community support and adequate resources are essential to the success of public education.

OUR VISION

A Greenville County that shines as a model for how collective community engagement yields opportunity and success for all students in public education.





READING SCHEDULE

In order to create a more accessible GCR during 2021's post-shutdown summer, we are intentionally reading selected essays from Delpit's anthology. This format allows each GCR meeting to stand alone. We hope you will join us as often as your schedule allows!

TUESDAY, JULY 13TH: ENGAGING FAMILIES

- "To My Son's Future Teacher, Colleague, Sister/Brother, Co-madre, Maestra, Comrade, Friend" by Crystal T. Laura
- "Engaging and Embracing Black Parents" by Allyson Criner Brown
- "Love for Syria" by Cami Touloukian

TUESDAY, JULY 20TH: CENTERING STUDENTS

- "Calling on Omar" by Carla Shalaby
- "The Three Illusions" by Julia Putnam
- "Believe Me the First Time" by Dale Weiss

TUESDAY, JULY 27TH: TEACHING IN THE FIRE

- "How One Elementary School Sparked a Citywide Movement to Make Black Students' Lives Matter" by Wayne Au and Jesse Hagopian
- "Teaching Middle School Students to Advocate" by Carolina Drake
- "Correct(ed): Confederate Public History" by James Loewen

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3RD: PANEL DISCUSSION

- featuring selected authors, Greenville County Schools educators, and student advocates





ENGAGING FAMILIES

“TO MY SON’S FUTURE TEACHER, COLLEAGUE, SISTER/BROTHER, CO-MADRE, MAESTRA, COMRADE, FRIEND” BY CRYSTAL T. LAURA

Dr. Laura writes, "[educators] are engaged in either incarceration prevention or incarceration expansion. It's just that real."

- Record your response to this assertion.
- Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

"Schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track," "the cradle-to-prison pipeline," & "the school-prison nexus" are just a few of the terms used to describe the criminalization of children.

- What language do you think most accurately describes the connection between school discipline and mass incarceration?

“ENGAGING AND EMBRACING BLACK PARENTS” BY ALLYSON CRINER BROWN

Brown asserts, "Good intentions by individual teachers will get us to a point," but "engaging Black families [...] must come with systemic supports and investments."

- What individual efforts can disrupt existing barriers for family involvement?
- What systems-level supports and investments from our community and our schools can help educators engage families?

“LOVE FOR SYRIA” BY CAMI TOULOUKIAN

Touloukian recounts the experience building and teaching her Syria Unit. Along the way, Touloukian experiences resistance from a parent.

- What strategies did Touloukian employ in order to successfully continue the Syrian Unit despite parental pushback?
- How did Touloukian build community and consensus among her families?

DIG DEEPER:

[Being Bad: My Baby Brother and the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#) by Dr. Crystal T. Laura

ACLU's 2017 report [Bullies in Blue: Origins & Consequences of School Policing](#)

The Atlantic's [Mass Incarceration, Visualized](#)

[The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The New York Times' [Why Is It So Difficult for Syrian Refugees to Get Into the U.S.?](#)

Education Week's [What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?](#)





CENTERING STUDENTS

"CALLING ON OMAR" BY CARLA SHALABY

Shalaby writes, "[children] remind us what school is actually for, what we are really there to do and to teach and to become together. We are at school to learn what it means to be human: to protect each other, to insist on community, to keep [...] hearts safe."

- What did Omar's class interruption teach?
- What lessons have you learned from young people in your life?

"THE THREE ILLUSIONS:

TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE CHANGE MAKERS" BY JULIA PUTNAM

Julia Putnam describes the three illusions outlined by Anand Giridharadas. These illusions are 1) "The Starfish Illusion," 2) "you can change the world without changing people," and 3) "you can change the world without being rooted in it."

- Which illusion do you think most often holds you back from creating change?

After the incident with Ms. Jazmin, Putnam hosts a restorative justice "peace circle." Each student is able to express what they were thinking and feeling during the incident, and how they might be able to make things right with Ms. Jazmin.

- How does this restorative practice differ from other "disciplinary" models?

"BELIEVE ME THE FIRST TIME" BY DALE WEISS

Weiss recounts the story of a young girl named Alexis who is persistently misgendered by her peers. Weiss invites Alexis to plan a teaching unit about gender.

- How does Weiss collaborate and empower Alexis?
- How does Weiss ensure Alexis' safety throughout this process?

DIG DEEPER:

[Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School](#) by Carla Shalaby
Student Voice's [Student Bill of Rights](#)

[Student Voice: The Instrument of Change](#) by Russell Quaglia and Michael Corso

Anand Giridharadas' ["Democracy is Not a Supermarket"](#)

GLSEN's [Model School District Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Curriculum](#) from Gender Inclusive Classrooms





TEACHING IN THE FIRE

"HOW ONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SPARKED A CITYWIDE MOVEMENT TO MAKE BLACK STUDENTS' LIVES MATTER" BY WAYNE AU AND JESSE HAGOPIAN

- What context, supports, and systems helped educators from John Muir Elementary be successful in organizing District-wide action?
- Which action to demonstrate solidarity, interrupt racism, and make Black students' lives matter did you find most impactful?

"TEACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADVOCATE" BY CAROLINA DRAKE

Drake writes, "years before high school and college, [...] the need to belong is at its strongest [...] that pull toward "belonging" is a source of untapped potential."

- How can the need to belong be harnessed to equip students for advocacy?
- How can student advocacy productively develop natural, youthful desires for defiance, risk-taking, and creativity?

"CORRECT(ED): CONFEDERATE PUBLIC HISTORY" BY JAMES LOEWEN

The Greenville Confederate Monument was first erected in 1892. It is inscribed with this line: "The world shall yet decide / in truth's clear far off light / that the soldiers / who wore the grey and died / with Lee, were in the right."

- What does this monument intend to teach us?

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. In 1960, a new high school was built in Greenville to consolidate students from Paris Mountain and Taylors. This new high school was named after Wade Hampton III, an prominent enslaver and a leader of the "Redeemers," a political coalition that wished to restore white rule.

- What does the naming of Wade Hampton High School intend to teach us?

DIG DEEPER:

[Black Lives Matter High School Lesson Plan](#) from the Anti-Defamation League
History's [Not Just Monuments: Schools Named After Confederates Are Rebranding](#)
The NYT's [Examining How the Syrian Crisis Has Shaped the Lives of Young Refugees](#)
[Planting the Seeds of Equity](#) edited by Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath

The New Yorker's [How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over CRT](#)

Loewen's NPR interview: [How American History Can Be Used As A Weapon](#)





Additional Resources

READ

- The Quaglia Institute's [School Voice Report](#)
- take an [Implicit Association Test](#) to reveal your own unconscious biases
- [How to Think About Implicit Bias](#)
- [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)
- [Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: An Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom](#) by Dr. Beverly D. Tatum
- The Atlantic's [What Anti-Racist Teachers Do Differently](#)
- James Loewen's [Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong](#)
- [Schoolhouse Burning: Public Education and the Assault on American Democracy](#) by Derek Black

LISTEN

- ["There is No Neutral: 'Nice' White People Can Still Be Complicit in a Racist Society"](#) an NPR Author Interview
- ["The Trayvon Generation"](#) by Elizabeth Alexander
- [Education Matters SC](#) podcast
- The New York Time's [Nice White Parents](#)

WATCH

- Clint Smith's ["Ode to the Only Black Kid in Class"](#)
- Gavin Grimm discusses [Supreme Court victory](#) in transgender bathroom dispute
- Eve Ewing's ["What a School Means"](#)
- ["Keeping Transgender Youth Safe"](#) a conversation with the Chase Strangio of the ACLU

InformEdsc.org

is an interactive, eLearning website on K-12 public education in Greenville County and South Carolina. Data is presented with the purpose of creating more informed citizens and elected representatives. Together we can advance the success of students in Greenville County Schools and in public schools throughout South Carolina. InformEdsc.org is a project of Public Education Partners Greenville County (PEP) in conjunction with Acuitas Economics and other partners.

