

What's the IDEA?

A publication of the Georgia Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education



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True or False:

- ♦ In the United States, academic freedom is backed by legal rights, such as the first Amendment.
- ♦ Being offended is the same as a violation of academic freedom.
- ♦ There are two types of academic freedom.
- ♦ 'For cause' employees are tenured employees.
- ♦ Clinical faculty have the same protections as tenured faculty.
- ♦ John Dewey is considered a major architect of academic freedom in education.

To find the answers and learn more about academic freedom go to page 6

GA NAME seeks to Inform, Dialog, Engage, and Advocate for a critical education for all.

To learn more about GA NAME go to www.ganame.org or email www.ganame2010@gmail.com

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A Letter from the President

Dear Educators,


I woke up this morning with my mind, stayed on freedom. Freedom echoing in surround sound, reverberating, resonating, leaving me contemplating about a word so profound, so serious, so buoyant, so radiant. What is freedom? Is “freedom” an actual place, a state of mind/being, a law or a policy? An exhortation on freedom would be multifaceted and multilayered. I start with the fact that freedom comes in many forms, academic being one of them. Lately, I have become more attentive to academic freedom and its implications for Multicultural Education. I would like to say I really understand exactly what academic freedom is because the application of the concept, especially where Multicultural Education is concerned, seems fraught with intimidation, misplaced fear, reprimands, threats of (and actual) job loss, and defensive strategies that belie my confidence in understanding what and who it serves. Education is not as “neutral” as touted and apparently, freedom has its limits.

As I ponder the concept of academic freedom, I am reminded of an image I saw in the newspaper several years ago. It features in the foreground the U.S. Statue of Liberty's hand holding the flamed torch. The torch in hand was encircled with spirals of barbed wire. Academic freedom seems to be a concept a lot like that image. I imagine the torch—symbolic as a beacon of freedom and a guiding light to those who seek safe harbor (literally and figuratively); however, like freedom itself, academic freedom can be ensnared and encircled by dangerous wire with intermittent smooth and thorny places. It often feels to me that issues of academic freedom are more thorny than smooth. From a teaching standpoint, is academic freedom designed to protect a professor who tells a class as fact, that “Slaves were happy” or a teacher who shows photographs of lynched enslaved people? Does it protect a teacher who claims that poor people are poor in the U.S. because they choose to be versus the teacher who has students examine the role of economic policies that keep people in cycles of high poverty? Is academic freedom applicable to the Christian Fundamentalist who feels stifled in class by Christian Liberalism? What happens when educators share their informed (or misinformed) passion about an issue with their peers, colleagues, administrators, legislators, or with the public? Apparently, freedom has its limits. Although, from what little I do understand, the perception of academic freedom is not limited to pedagogical approaches or ideologies, but it is also informed by the political, social, economic, and historical contexts in which educators carry out their work.

A long-standing assertion about public education spaces, like PK-12 schools, colleges, and universities is that these are places to engage and test ideas; to open values and beliefs to critique (which is not the same as ridicule or indoctrination); and develop skills to discern information and experiences; however, when it comes to academic freedom, where does the line get drawn, who draws it, and for whom is the barbed wire an indicator of protection rather than a threat of danger? How do we liberate academic freedom from the issues that seem to ensnare and limit its full merit? A better question might be what do we risk losing without it?

In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker J. Palmer spends a fair amount of time discussing the fear of the *live encounter* that can happen between teachers and students. Live encounters are moments when fear inhibits or motivates real live healthy encounters with people (and I would add, ideas). Engaging fear can be some of the most liberating work possible. In *Indoctrination U.* (published by Encounter Books), David Horowitz (2007) says that “Students are in school to be educated, which necessarily includes hearing several views on controversial issues and being left to form their own” (p.113). Multicultural Education at its root is a means to developing live encounters and educated students and the freedom from fear to do so is grounded in academic freedom. In order to get from fear to freedom we must consider justice. How do we do justice to the topics and issues we teach? One way is through academic freedom. If freedom is meant to be exercised, we need to think about how we exercise our freedoms in our lives, in our classrooms and for what aims.

~Vera Stenhouse



“This fear of the live encounter is actually a sequence of fears that begins in the fear of diversity. As long as we inhabit a universe made homogenous by our refusal to admit otherness, we can maintain the illusion that we possess the truth about ourselves and the world—after all, there is no ‘other’ to challenge us! But as soon as we admit pluralism, we are forced to admit that ours is not the only standpoint, the only experience, the only way, and the truths we have built our lives on begin to feel fragile.”

~Parker J. Palmer

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life, 1998, p. 38



Legal Rights All Georgia Teachers Should Know

Can you name any one of the 8 reasons that you can be terminated or your contract non-renewed for your teaching job? Do teachers in Georgia have tenure? If you are a teacher or work with teachers you should be aware of the answers to these questions. We often use the phrase “knowledge is power” to motivate students, and the same applies to teachers and administrators. It is in this vein that we asked Attorney Borquaye Thomas (www.theteacherslawyer.com) to share a broad and brief overview of legal rights all Georgia teachers should know.

1. Teachers are protected.

The Georgia Fair Dismissal (“FDA”) Act gives teachers [this does not apply to private schools and many charter schools] additional protection before adverse employment decisions impact their employment. While, employees in other sectors can be terminated for any non-discriminatory or retaliatory reason, the FDA prescribes eight specific grounds for suspensions, terminations/non-renewals. The eight reasons are:

- ◆ Incompetency;
- ◆ Insubordination;
- ◆ Willful neglect of duties;
- ◆ Immorality;
- ◆ Inciting, encouraging, or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the local board of education;
- ◆ To reduce staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs;
- ◆ Failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training; or
- ◆ Any other good and sufficient cause.

The FDA provisions do not apply equally to all teachers. Some provisions extend additional protection to so-called “tenured” educators. Consult with counsel knowledgeable in the area of Georgia School law before attempting to handle any matter independently.

2. Know Your Status.

The provisions of the FDA pertain to certified educators with tenure rights and certificated educators holding a contract for a “definite term.” There are two classes of teachers: tenured and non-tenured. Non-administrative employees certificated by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) who accept a school year contract from the same local board of education for the fourth consecutive year earn tenured status with that local school board. Tenured teachers gain the right to subsequent school year contracts*. Non-tenured teachers maintain

no affirmative right to rehire at the completion of one school year contract. Prior to discharge or suspension, however, teachers holding a contract for a definite term, are entitled to a hearing.

3. Recognizing signs that your job is in jeopardy and what to do next.

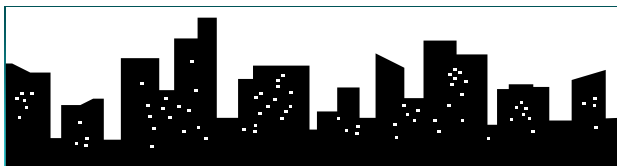
Because there are only eight grounds upon which suspension, non-renewal, or termination can be based, teachers must remain cognizant of signs that their positions are in jeopardy. Warning signs include increased surveillance/monitoring, heightened incidence of written warnings, or correspondences related to trivial violations not generally of concern. In most hearings, local school boards utilize observations and evaluations to support their recommendations. Professional Development Plans (PDP’s) are also used to support termination or non-renewal.

The issuance of a PDP does not always signal trouble. However, once used to identify and remediate performance deficiencies, PDPs have become a frequent tool in support of discipline. Do not assist the local board in documenting alleged deficiencies. Ask questions about expectations *in writing*. Be *specific*. Ask for *specific* questions on how to meet objectives. In response, do exactly what is asked of you and more!

Do not hesitate to write responses to written notices about your performance. However, remain diplomatic rather than confrontational. You do not want to encourage your own discharge. Create documentation of your case. In hearings, written documentation of your supposed deficiency will most likely be introduced. Have your own supportive documentation ready. Lastly, if you feel that you are being targeted as a result of discrimination, immediately consult your employee handbook and follow the procedures for filing a complaint of discrimination or grievance. Be very *specific* in your explanation. While additional retaliation may follow, you may be protected from such conduct by federal law.

This article is in no way intended to be an exhaustive reference on the Georgia Fair Dismissal Act. For additional and/or specific information, contact a local school law attorney in your area.

*Generally tenured teachers are guaranteed additional employment contract, but exceptions exist. For more information, contact your local school law attorney.



Community Focus

MORE ABOUT ATTORNEY BORQUAYE A. THOMAS

GA NAME first met Attorney Borquaye A. Thomas through a Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS) information session on the legal rights of teachers in Georgia. As a contributor to this issue, he discusses basic legal rights Georgia teachers should know. We asked Attorney Thomas to share some background information, more about his focus on education law, and the importance of why educators should know their rights.

How long have you been practicing law?

For ten years. I graduated from UCLA School of Law, worked at UC Berkley for four years and began practicing in Atlanta, Georgia in 2002.

How did you get involved in education law?

I stumbled upon it. I was unaware of the area of law specific to education until I moved to Atlanta.

Would you say that educators know their rights?

Why? Why not?

Unfortunately, most educators do not know their rights for various reasons. There are few resources and venues that consistently educate educators on their rights. School districts often might fail to inform educators of their rights and many attorneys do not actually specialize in education law.

Why is it important for educators to know their rights?

The saying, "knowledge is power," is what always comes to my mind. Most people do not realize that there are certain protections that only teachers have. Knowing your rights and protections helps to make informed decisions. This is no different for educators and informed decision-making is an important part of being in a democracy.

What types of services do you offer and what is unique about them?

We only represent teachers. We do not represent school districts, students, or parents. We understand that uniqueness of education law.

What is some of the best guidance or suggestions you would have for teachers as they try to navigate the political, social, economic, and ethical facets of their work?

Document everything. It should be a natural part of maintaining healthy and productive professional relationships.

Additional organizations serving educators nationally and locally

The National Education Association (NEA) <http://www.nea.org/home/49853.htm> The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States. [From Website]

Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) www.gae.org/ Every day you choose work on the front lines on the behalf our children and public education. And you, more than anymore, realize the importance of receiving support and guidance when you need it. Your professional association, GAE [Georgia Association of Educators], stands ready to help you when and where you need it. As our motto clearly states - We exist to support, protect, and strengthen those who nurture Georgia's children. [From Website]

The Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) <http://www.pageinc.org/> The Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE), founded in 1975, is the largest organization for professional educators in the state, with more than 84,000 educators, administrators and school support personnel members. PAGE offers its members unmatched legislative advocacy, legal protection and attorneys who are available by phone, e-mail or fax during normal business hours. In addition, PAGE provides professional learning to enhance competence and confidence, build leadership and increase student achievement. [From Website]

Also check out

EmpowerED Georgia www.empoweredga.org

EmpowerED Georgia is a nonpartisan, education advocacy group dedicated to bringing students, parents, teachers, and the community together in order to ensure public education is a priority in state legislation. Currently, we have over 3,500 members from across Georgia.

Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS)

<https://sites.google.com/site/metroatlantans-forpublicschools/> is a network of progressive public school employees, parents, students and allies who believe that public education should be democratic, well-funded, and community-supported. We use a list serve and website to keep ourselves updated on current issues in public education.

Academic Freedom: A Conversation

Part I

In 1915 a professor at Johns Hopkins, Arthur O. Lovejoy and John Dewey convened a meeting that resulted in an organization, American Association of University Professors (AAUP), that made certain that academic freedom was applied to the work of faculty (See AAUP history at aaup.org). To learn more about academic freedom, we spoke with Chris Ziegler, President of the Georgia Conference of AAUP, a AAUP member since 1992, and educator for 32 years, for some information and insight.

What is Academic Freedom (AF)? How is it defined?

Actually there are two types of AF. One type, most people are more familiar with and that is the freedom of inquiry. Faculty and students should be able to pursue inquiry without fear of repercussions, for example, talking about important ideas without worrying about losing ones' job. It is also about students in that they should be free to inquire. Conversations should focus on the topic at hand and are relevant to the topic of the day. Having opportunities to inquire does not mean that people are free to offend. If the conversations got offensive or irrelevant to what is being discussed, something would need to be done. My job is not to shut down discussion but students are to be protected.

The second type, of AF is institutional. AF protects colleges from being overly influenced by government, for example. So, despite receiving funds from the state, doing so is not meant to influence what we can and cannot do in schools-whether ultra liberals or ultra conservatives are making decisions. Yet, of course, we recognize that funding can change based on the decision-makers.

In essence, AF should provide the space and opportunity for a professor to discuss 'the good, the bad, and the ugly' without having to apologize for doing so. Most people do not understand why we have these rights and how vital they are to academia.

How does AF differ from K-12 and higher education?

K-12 does not have representation in AAUP. K-12 educators have other organizations that address their rights and protections. Overall, I think that more opportunity for interaction should happen between higher ed and K-12 because we are all in this together.

What are the protections afforded through AF and who is protected?

Keep in mind that AF does not have a legal backing. It is not connected to any law. People assume the first Amendment; however, it's the universities that grant a culture supportive of AF and the AAUP defends it. It's dependent on the culture. Academic cultures are about AF and some cultures can be less conducive to AF. It can vary from public institutions, private, and other institutional types.

Also, there are 'at will' employees and 'for cause.' 'At will' employees move to 'for cause' when they become tenured. If you are 'at will,' you can look at someone the wrong way and get fired. To be removed 'for cause' means there needs to be a really good reason to get rid of you. You have done something really untoward like, for example, selling drugs to students or engaging in inappropriate relationships. Each institution has it's own policies on what would constitute grounds for removing a tenured faculty member.

What you described reflects ethical issues. What about those we might find in teaching practices?

In that case, it's about the freedom to teach ideas, ideas related to what topics are being addressed in class. Faculty should be good role models; handle things in a straight forward manner and we need it to handle what's not to be tolerated in the classroom. If student comments become disrespectful or offensive they could be invited to leave for the rest of the class. I specifically include this possibility in my syllabus. When this has had to happen in my classes it has been for reasons such as a drunken student or a student making lewd comments, not because of being offended, or because of AF issues.

I also use my syllabus to detail for students that they should feel comfortable raising their points in class., as long as other students and the instructor are respected. Also, students mistake being offended and what constitutes a violation of AF. We need to be very careful especially with wording or language. Sometimes it means reinforcing, "There are those who would say..." so that if asked, I can clarify that I am not saying it but a contingent, whether we like it or not, has expressed that view or opinion. It's important to hear what the other side said. It provides more information so we know better how to respond. For example, I listen to a radio station that is contrary to my ideology and political views so I will be informed of the positions on both sides of an argument.

Academic Freedom continued

GA NAME is built upon Multicultural Education which supports democratic principles and invites multiple perspectives and encourages critique. Many times this work is positioned as 'indoctrination' or 'politically one-sided' or not 'educational' or 'scholarly,' despite history to the contrary. How do we better position this work through the support of AF rather than an aberration?

Multiculturalism gets push back and support. It's about levels of tolerance. Some don't respect multiculturalism but do not say negative things about it. Most professors, politically conservative or liberal, believe in the ideal that there is and should be tolerance. This means respect for the views of others. You could present the down sides [of multiculturalism] if they existed and AF defends the right to do so. It's my job to educate students on all sides of an issue, not to use my classes as a venue to express my personal opinions.

What's the difference between educating and indoctrinating students?

I believe educating our students means providing them with ample information so they can formulate their own views. It's about putting something out there and asking 'so what do you think?' and supporting them in thinking past the obvious. Not leaving them with your point of view but with the tools to form their own opinions. Indoctrination is to say some idea or view is either right or wrong. A quality education equates to facilitating the development of critical thinkers who can evaluate the quality of the information available and formulate their own views. This is what AF allows for in our work.

What distinguishes the two types of AAUPs?

One type is the Collective Bargaining Congress— located in states where there are unions and rights are more specifically negotiated in contracts. Right now colleges and universities in 22 states have CBCs. The second type is Assembly of States Conferences (ASCs), which are not collective bargaining units. They are not under the same legal protections as unions but can be in union states. 31 states have ASCs. The Georgia Conference of AAUP is an ASC.

How and why would organizations like AAUP get involved with issues of AF?

AAUP will sanction universities that seriously violate the principles of AF, shared governance, and transparency. We have a censure list located on our Website (www.aaup.org). It is useful to see what institutions and why they are on the list. This is a very serious action that requires a major violation of AAUP principles (see recent action regarding Emory). [Go to: <http://www.emorywheel.com/an-open-letter-from-the-aaup/> or http://news.emory.edu/stories/2012/12/er_national_AAUP_letter/campus.html]

What about instances whereby faculty are told their job contract will not be renewed?

Everyone is supposed to have a formal annual review. I believe it's against the law not to. It's up to the department chair to evaluate, and review each faculty member. They are obliged to provide an evaluation based on the information given; to indicate whether you are on track or not. If it happens (non-renewal) it's likely one should have known it was coming-not always, but in general. What it means to be tenured is you have moved from "at will" to "for cause". At that point you have earned the right to expect that you will remain at the institution as long as established expectations are met.

What about clinical faculty?

Clinical faculty are defined differently in different places. However, overall, clinical are subject to a different set of circumstances. It does not mean that AAUP will not support clinical, clinical employees just do not have the same job descriptions.

What are some important caveats we should keep in mind regarding what is expected of faculty in light of AF and policies and procedures?

Everyone should understand the rules regarding ethical behavior and read your contract. I'm not sure how many people really read their contract. I was involved in a controversial hire, which a newspaper turned into a circus. Because of my various roles at the university, the newspaper requested my emails because I am a part of a public university. Anyone can make the request [through the freedom of information act] but not everybody can get the information or the requestor decides not to proceed with the request, which is what happened in my situation.

Also, as far as I know, there is not a single university that does not have a faculty handbook. It is incumbent on faculty to ensure reasonable appropriate education and a modicum of protection. If it is clearly stated in the handbook, then AAUP can assist when established policies outlined in a Faculty Handbook are not followed.

Anything more you would like to emphasize?

More awareness of what AF is and what is and isn't protected under certain circumstances. Under the protection of AF, I should not feel my credibility and integrity infringed upon.

Upcoming issue, a conversation about Academic Freedom continues. We discuss:

- How should professors talk to legislators?
- What's the role of shared governance in AF and other university policies?
- What are local resources and opportunities to learn more about AF?

Spotlight on Political Rhetoric and Policy: Shifts in Teacher Education and Academic Freedom By Morgan Faison

Shifts in teacher education are beginning to mirror the diminishing autonomy and de-professionalization of K-12 classroom teachers. Neoliberalism continues to re-define public education as a corporate business investment for the economic benefit of the private sector, rather than a democratic process and a public good. Teacher educators' work and worth are being dictated by neoliberal influences on politics and policy. As such, the opportunity to develop more critical courses of study for pre-service teachers is at a serious risk of compromise.

For instance, neoliberal rhetoric persisted throughout the 2012 Presidential debates. During the first debate at the University of Denver on October 3, the candidates primary educational sector issues included calls for an increase in "school choice" (Gov. Romney) and a higher investment into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives (Pres. Obama). Both candidates maintained that these investments would allow for the country to remain globally competitive. Their perception and prescription of the problem neglects to address the broader issues of educational inequity, but instead reinforces the neoliberal agenda of economic world dominance.

Political rhetoric directly influences educational policy that ultimately places certain pressures on the design of many teacher education programs. Given current federal and state policies, teachers are effective only to the extent that they can prepare students for high-stakes and standardized examinations. The task of a good teacher education program, therefore, is to indoctrinate teachers into the banking-method approach (Freire, 1970) to instruction.

For those who are committed to issues of equity and social justice, finding and occupying a space for critical interrogation and transformation of our society is becoming a subversive activity. Many teacher educators should be applauded for their savvy navigation of standardized structures that seek to compromise the integrity of content-within-context exploration. However, we all must begin to acknowledge the difficulties inherent in this navigation. Who is talking about power and privilege in teacher education coursework and what place of importance will these conversations continue to occupy? How does academic freedom allow for such conversations, which are vital to public education? Pre-service teachers should be supported in exploring the sociopolitical contexts that shape their identities and the lives of their future students. Likewise, the rhetoric, presidential or otherwise, that frames our educational foci should reflect the needs of our diverse nation.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Progressive Schools: The Beginnings of Academic Freedom for Teachers By Fahima Ife

My first teaching position came with assurances of complete academic freedom and I eagerly accepted a contract with what I believed to be a progressive school. However, I quickly learned otherwise after a meeting with my Instructional Coach. In less than five minutes, my theories about pedagogy were trivialized as I was given scripted teaching material. Multiple times per week this same coach, who had completely surrendered to the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), interrupted my instruction under the pretense of co-teaching. Throughout that first year I understood the necessity in locating schools founded upon creativity. Until all schools provide academic freedom for teachers and students, spotlighting innovative programs seems a necessary step in coaxing the transformation of restrictive teaching environments.

While dynamic teacher preparation programs construct our role in the classroom, spaces opposing progressive education remain. As I navigated a difficult school year, I recalled conversations with veteran teachers I met during my preservice days who laughed at the notion of being able to actually bridge theory with the classroom. It was sad to discover why this might be laughable.

In my search for models towards autonomy, I discovered The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). CES is a national network linking progressive educators with progressive schools. It is not a management company that owns charter schools. My second year in the classroom, I was privileged to work with a local CES school committed to constructivism, critical inquiry, and academic freedom. I no longer felt the pressure of being in a test-driven environment and I was free to plan meaningful instruction for my students.

In the future, I hope to see progressive schools become models for public schools that embody an emphasis on test-driven curricula. When teachers are given academic freedom, space is created for discussions about extending such liberties to other teachers in other schools. When teachers are given academic license, students are also empowered to create.

Freedom from Fear

By Melissa Cohen

Student teaching is an exhaustive and exhausting experience. Throughout a practicum, one must acclimate to an already established classroom environment, balance full teaching responsibilities with graduate-school requirements, and discover—for the first time—one's own identity as an educator. Though student teachers are akin to the unpaid intern, a lack of salary and contract safely allows for a more experimental approach to teaching, if one is willing. It was under these circumstances that I taught a lesson comparing the lynching of Emmett Till to the murder of Trayvon Martin.

The day our 11th-grade U.S. History class (in an affluent suburban Atlanta high school) transitioned to the Civil Rights Movement unit, was the day that the news broke out about Trayvon Martin. The weekend prior, I planned a lesson focusing on Emmett Till—a 14-year-old African American visiting an uncle in Mississippi murdered in the middle of the night for talking to a white woman. I designed a unit focused on the participation, activism, and victimization of young people throughout the Civil Rights Movement. I felt that Emmett Till's tragic fate would exemplify how susceptible young people were to racist violence and ignorance during the hostile 1950's and 1960's.

Having heard students grumbling in between classes about this shooting for a couple of days, I believed not addressing this tragic incident in the context of the Civil Rights Movement would be negligent. Unafraid, I didn't think twice about modifying this lesson. I first read aloud a summary of events surrounding the lynching of Emmett Till and then read a news article about the killing of Trayvon Martin.

We held a class discussion comparing and contrasting the two murders. The purpose of this conversation was to associate racial prejudice—rather, perceived prejudice—with violent acts of non-African Americans against African Americans, especially against African-American teenagers. We spoke often of fear. Who feared whom most, and why? Students elaborated on this question. Was the woman Emmett Till spoke with actually afraid of Emmett, or did her husband kill Till simply because of hate? Similarly, did George Zimmerman shoot Trayvon Martin out of fear or hate? A Florida jury decides the latter.

While the class demographics lacked ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, the students' reactions were surprisingly diverse. Throughout the unit, we often returned to the topic of Trayvon Martin's death. Students constantly raised their hands to the tune of "it's still sort of like that today."

After all, the Georgia Department of Education stipulates in its U.S. History standards that students should be able to "describe the causes and consequences of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965." A consequence of such an act should be the abolishment of racially motivated crime. My students considered the potential current applications of the Civil Rights Act in regards to possible racist violence in the Trayvon Martin case. Additionally, these Acts provided theoretical equality of all men and women before the law, a law which includes freedom from fear. All citizens of this country, young and old, black and white, deserve freedom from fear of unjust persecution.

Yet, although *Teaching Tolerance* and *EdWeek* called Trayvon Martin's murder a "teachable moment," Brook Harris, an 8th grade teacher in Pontiac, Michigan, was fired for helping students to fundraise on behalf of Trayvon Martin's family. Martin was wearing a hoodie at the time of his murder and a volunteer neighborhood watchman, George Zimmerman, allegedly shot him because of how he looked. In order to show solidarity with Martin and his family, the fundraiser simply involved volun-

tarily paying \$1 to wear a hoodie, an otherwise infamous piece of clothing with racist associations to "hoodlums". Though the principal immediately approved the fundraiser, the superintendent rejected the proposal, eventually leading to the firing of Brook Harris. According to Maureen Costello and Alice Pettway at the *Huffington Post*, the superintendent explained that Harris lost her job because "she was paid to teach, not to be an activist."

Public schools exist fundamentally to teach future citizens. Should we not teach our future citizens to participate actively in their community, government, and beyond? Teaching activism is a critical component to public school education. If students never learn to volunteer, protest, or stand by their convictions in a safe environment (their schools), then they won't know how to effectively participate in our democracy.



Once I recovered from my initial reaction of searing anger to the *Huffington Post* article, I panicked about my own (less than perfect) lessons involving Trayvon Martin.

In a predominantly white, conservative, and affluent school, what sort of reaction would I have faced from parents and administration? My cooperating teacher, though supportive, seemed extremely uncomfortable whenever I discussed Trayvon Martin. Had I been actually

employed, would my lessons have yielded some sort of disciplinary action? I sure hope not.

Student teachers, in my limited experiences, are generally issued more academic liberties than those with a contract. Should they be? Each school district differs with regards to academic freedom, but teachers—contracted or otherwise—should feel freedom from fear of persecution for incorporating controversial current events into the context of his or her lessons.

If the purpose of studying history is to learn from our past, then shouldn't we actually do so?

It is easy for students today to look at the Civil Rights Movement in the United States as distant and irrelevant especially in a predominantly white school where the majority of students need hardly ever fear violence due to their racial identity/privilege. I taught the lesson to connect with those who are afraid of racism and to shed light and understanding onto those who do not.

As a history teacher, whether a student teacher or a contracted one, I feel that it would be not only irresponsible, but also remiss to not make correlations between the two murders during an already scheduled lesson on the subject.

It is my opinion that all social studies teachers should feel adequately prepared and encouraged to address controversial and critical current events in the context of the classroom and standards. If we do not raise the consciousness of students to such repetitions, then they will not be able to do so as adults and the cycles of hatred will perpetuate.

Costello, M., & Pettway, A. "Risky Lesson: Teacher Fired for Bringing Trayvon Martin Into Class." *The Huffington Post*. Ed. Lance Gould. N.p., 10 Apr. 2012. Web. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maureen-costello/teacher-trayvon-martin_b_1413289.html.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN INDIA SUBJECT TO PULLS AND PRESSURES by Hema Ramanathan

Academic freedom in universities, the freedom to teach without external control in one's area of expertise, is a fairly new concept in modern Indian universities. Three curricular decisions have in recent years provoked a national outcry and an active response from academia regarding infringements on academic freedom.

The first two decisions took place at the tertiary level (higher education), where the process for defining recommended or required reading material is an elaborate, multi-stage process. University curriculum committees decide on specific titles that form the core of teaching and examination for the various programs and courses, and examinations are based on the specific content. These lists of books are periodically reviewed and updated by appointed committees. All affiliated institutions follow these instructions assiduously, with few professors providing for reading outside of these lists. In common with complaints about their peers in the U.S., students in India also pay little attention to material that will not be 'on the test.'

First, in 2010, Mumbai University, one of the oldest in the country, removed Rohinton Mistry's novel, *Such a Long Journey*, from its undergraduate B.A. syllabus. Mistry has won many awards and was short listed for the prestigious Man Booker prize (The Booker Prize, 1996). The Shiv Sena, a political group formed to demand preferential treatment for Mumbai natives over migrants to the city, claimed that the book makes disparaging comments about their group and the denizens of the city, specifically the famous "dabbawalahs", who deliver millions of lunch tins to office workers, a business model that has been widely studied for its phenomenal efficiency.

Second, renowned scholar and linguist, A.K. Ramanujan, who shaped and led the South Asian Studies at the University of Chicago (*A.K. Ramanujan Papers*, 2010). A.K. Ramanujan's celebrated essay on the Hindu epic, the Ramayana, titled *Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translations* is a scholarly analysis of various national and international versions of the epic. It was on the required reading for a B.A. History honors program at Delhi University, another premier higher education institution in India. A small group of activists of a Hindu fundamentalist organization called it obscene and blasphemous, and claimed that it hurt the sentiments of the Hindu community. They vandalized the History department at the university and beat up faculty. The essay was referred to four experts, three of whom said that its academic merit was unexceptionable. The differing expert's concern was that the essay challenged the students beyond their capacity and so was inappropriate for undergraduate teaching. When this decision was challenged in the courts, it was battled back to the University's Academic Council, which voted the essay out (University of Delhi. 2012).. Critics claim that this decision was taken without much thought or preparation, with irregular procedures such as the issue not listed on the agenda and members not having read the essay (Bhumika & Paresh, 2008).

The third instance of curriculum decision bowing to a minority opinion relates to the K-12 setting rather than a higher education platform. The National Council for Educational Research and Training is the apex body that publishes books most widely used in K-12 schools in India. In a high school political science textbook, a cartoon first published in 1948 depicts a crowd of onlookers watching Nehru, the first prime minister of India, standing with a raised whip behind a large snail marked 'Constitution.' Ambedkar, a revered leader of the oppressed castes or Dalits, is shown seated, the snail with the reins in one hand and a whip in the other. The cartoon portrays Nehru's impatience at the progress of the committee chaired by Ambedkar which took almost three years to produce the draft of the constitution. The accompanying text "celebrates the deliberations" that led to an excellent document. In the wake of an outcry from Dalits, supported by some politicians, the Indian government unilaterally ordered the removal of the cartoon from the textbook rather than referring it back to either the team of scholars who had written it or the committee that had approved it.

In each of these cases, it is obvious that teaching at any level in India is not without 'unreasonable interference or restriction.' The "surrender of academic freedom to political pressure" as eminent Indian historian Romila Thapar (Jebaraj, 2011) lamented, circumvents the process for syllabus change and potentially damages the reputation of academia. While many in the professoriate may be reluctant in their acquiescence to this surrender, far fewer would share Prof. Apoorvanand's (2011) opinion of feeling "diminished as teacher." The concept of academic freedom with regard to curriculum may be debated or challenged in Indian universities; however, the more subtle and sensitive issues of academic freedom as social responsibility or in relation to human rights are as yet little understood, especially when national security and terrorism are invoked.

A.K. Ramanujan Papers. (2010, October 3). The University of Chicago Library News, Special Collection News. Retrieved from <http://news.lib.uchicago.edu/blog/2010/03/03/ak-ramanujan-papers/>

Apoorvanand. (2011, October 13) The closing of our minds. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/the-closing-of-our-minds/859059/0>.

Bhumika and Paresh. (2008). *Mahesh Rangarajan on Ramanujan's "300 Ramayanas" and the controversy*. Retrieved from [http://](http://radicalnotes.files.wordpress.com/2008/10/4ramayanas.pdf)

Jebaraj, P. (2011, October 28). The richness of the Ramayana, the poverty of a University. *The Hindu, Opinion, Interview with Romila Thapar*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/article2574398.ece>.

The Booker Prize. (1996). Retrieved from <http://www.themanbookerprize.com/timeline>

University of Delhi. (2012). *Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Council held on Wednesday, 21st March, 2012 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council room, University of Delhi*. p. 4 173/8. Retrieved from http://www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/DU/Administration/pdf/21512_EC_Meeting_21_March.pdf

Academic Freedom Resources

Organizations

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/AF/> For more than ninety years the AAUP has been engaged in developing standards for protecting academic freedom and in working for the acceptance of these standards by the community of higher education. The Association has long been viewed as the authoritative voice of the academic profession in this regard. Statements, reports, and policies dealing with academic freedom, as well as with other key issues, are published in the AAUP's *Policy Documents and Reports*, also known as the "Redbook."

Difficult Dialogues Initiative. <http://www.difficultdialogues.org/> The *Difficult Dialogues National Resource Center* is dedicated to promoting civic engagement, academic freedom and pluralism in higher education. The Center seeks to foster constructive dialogue about some of society's most contentious issues, including: race, religion, sexual orientation, and conflicts in the Middle East. They provide training and other resources to enable faculty, staff and students to more effectively address these issues in the classroom and across the campus. Our local Emory University utilizes this initiative through their *Transforming Community Program*.

Articles

Executive Summary: Protecting an Independent Faculty Voice: Academic Freedom after *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2009) - AAUP. <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/postgarcettireport.htm>

Most faculty may be unaware that a recent Supreme Court decision, *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006), and several subsequent lower-court rulings applying that decision to higher education pose a serious threat to academic freedom and the ability of faculty in public institutions to participate freely in academic governance. The seriousness of this threat led the AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure to form a subcommittee to examine the potential impact of the *Garcetti* decision and to suggest actions to be taken in both public and private colleges and universities to preserve academic freedom even in the face of judicial hostility or indifference. Because of the length and detailed legal analysis of its report, the subcommittee has also prepared this executive summary to make its general findings more readily accessible and to highlight its call for action outside the limited confines of the courts.

AAUP Journal of Academic Freedom . <http://www.academicfreedomjournal.org/index.html>

Publishes scholarship on academic freedom and on its relation to shared governance, tenure, and collective bargaining. The *Journal* provides a central place to track the developing international discussion about academic freedom and its collateral issues. The *Journal* is published online. Essays range from historical studies to analyses of contemporary conflicts, from accounts of individual faculty experiences to institutional histories.

Books

Indoctrination U: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom (2009) by David Horowitz

Horowitz has proposed an Academic Bill of Rights that he wants to see adopted by colleges and universities across the country to, "stop liberal bias from being introduced into college classrooms"; a lofty and noble goal that should be instituted - if it applies to ALL colleges and universities. The author, however, implies that such a Bill of Rights is only largely needed at "liberal" colleges. Horowitz is a controversial academic with definitive opinions about his version of academic freedom; yet, his is a perspective that should not be overlooked, as voices, no matter how egregious, should not be silenced.

http://www.amazon.com/Indoctrination-Lefts-Against-Academic-Freedom/dp/1594032378/ref=sr_1_sc_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1342799483&sr=8-1-spell&keywords=indoctrination+u

The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University (2010) by Ellen Schrecker

Schrecker tells the interwoven stories of well-funded ideological assaults on academic freedom by outside pressure groups aimed at undermining the legitimacy of scholarly study, viewed alongside decades of eroding higher education budgets -- a trend that has sharply accelerated during the recent economic downturn.

http://www.amazon.com/Lost-Soul-Higher-Education-Corporatization/dp/1595584005/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1342800220&sr=1-2&keywords=academic+freedom

Academic Repression: Reflections from the Academic Industrial Complex (2010) by Anthony J. Nocella II, Steven Best, & Peter McLaren (Eds).

In these times of US Imperialism, global capitalism, and transnational corporations, seems as if education is being eviscerated in the name of profit. Thousands of students are protesting in the streets in England over tuition increases, hundreds of US students are awakening to the reality of drastically increased tuition bills and student loans, and faculty in the US are being fired because of their political beliefs. This book takes the reader backstage of what the authors call the "academic industrial complex" for a closer examination of the underlying corporatization that is the catalyst for the aforementioned outcomes. This book tells the stories of women of color, people with disabilities, scholars, and nonunionized staff being dismissed without notice or preamble. Read now for the sake of higher ed!

<http://www.amazon.com/Academic-Repression-Reflections-Industrial-Complex/dp/1904859984>

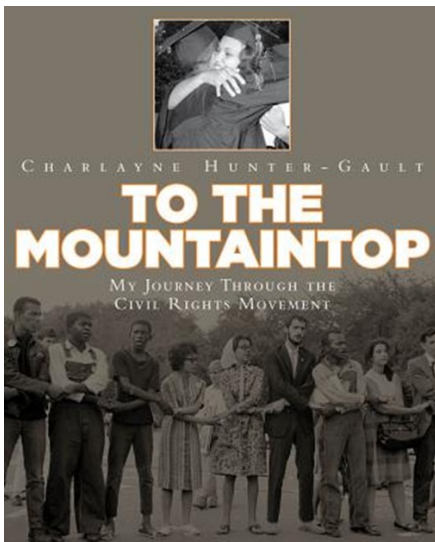
BOOK REVIEW

Civil Rights

by Mary Hollowell

Hunter-Gault, Charlayne (2012). *To the Mountaintop: My Journey Through the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Roaring Brook Press. 208 pages. ISBN-10: 1596436050 ISBN-13: 978-1596436053

Charlayne Hunter-Gault chronicles the Civil Rights Movement in her new book *To the Mountaintop*. She begins by sharing her joy at the inauguration of President Barack Obama. In subsequent chapters, she takes readers on a journey back in time and highlights the triumphs and tragedies of the Civil Rights Movement. Hunter-Gault outlines key events such as the Freedom Rides, the March on Washington, and the



March on Selma. These events are covered using clear prose and graphic images. Some of the photographs evoke painful feelings but they are eye-opening and necessary in order for readers to learn about past injustices and not repeat them. *To the Mountaintop* is intended for ages 12 and up, and the book will be useful for classroom teachers. The text is enlivened by including many primary resources such as newspaper clippings, excerpts from letters and speeches, and lyrics of freedom songs.

To the Mountaintop is a children's history book that is partially autobiographical. Throughout her narrative of the Civil Rights Movement, the author also shares her own personal experiences as one of the first two black students, along with Hamilton Holmes, to attend the University of Georgia in 1961. The author overcame threats and fatigue to integrate the flagship university in Athens, Georgia. One of the book's most tri-

umphant photos shows Hunter-Gault and Holmes in their caps and gowns, together on graduation day. Hunter-Gault followed her dream of one day becoming a journalist. Throughout her career at *The New York Times*, Cable News Network, and National Public Radio, she wrote many news stories about civil rights in countries such as South Africa, Haiti, and Somalia.

Hunter-Gault concludes her book and brings it full circle with this special news item. When former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader and current U.S. Congressman John Lewis (D-Georgia) asked new President Barack Obama to autograph a photo, Obama gratefully signed. He wrote, "Because of you, John. Barack Obama."

To the Mountaintop will stand alongside Ken Burns' documentary film series *Eyes on the Prize* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/>) as an important library resource. Hunter-Gault's comprehensive coverage of the Civil Rights Movement will inform a new generation of Americans. One of the author's stated goals is to arm readers "with historical confidence in how to successfully face challenges." She has done so, mightily, by skillfully weaving her own inspirational story with those of John Lewis, Barack Obama, and many other African Americans who have made an indelible impression on US history.

Socioeconomic Status and Test Scores: A Global Comparison

By Shanna Ricketts

Since the year 2000, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has evaluated 15-year olds from countries across the world to determine their math, science and reading comprehension levels through an assessment called Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), on a three-year rotation. The results presented here are based on the latest assessment done in 2009, in which the focus was on reading literacy.

Overall, students in the United States scored a 500, which was not measurably different from the OECD average of 493 (Fleischman et al., 2010). Yet, when the results are broken out by the school socioeconomic context, as measured by the percentage of students at a school who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, a more nuanced picture emerges. Students who attended a school with 75% or more students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch had an average score of 446, while students who attended a school with less than 10% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch had an average score of 551 (Fleischman et al., 2010).

These statistics may (or may not) be alarming at first glance; however, what is surely surprising to note is that a negative relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement is overwhelmingly more unique to certain countries including the United States (Rothstein, 2004).



Researchers looked at the percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in other countries that achieved relatively high scores on PISA. On this metric, the United States was well below the OECD average, whereas countries such as China, Korea, Singapore and Finland topped the scale (OECD, 2011). These results highlight the fact that more can and should be done to ensure that in the United States a student's educational achievement does not rely on his or her socioeconomic status. Moreover, the implications from this data suggest that several other countries are doing a better job of mitigating negative relationships between socioeconomic levels and student academic achievement. A closer look at the educational models that are used by these countries might be useful in enabling under-resourced student's equitable access to education.

Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools. Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the black-white achievement gap*. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University

Fleischman, H.L., Hopstock, P.J., Pelczar, M.P., & Shelley, B.E. (2010). *Highlights From PISA 2009: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Reading, Mathematics, and Science Literacy in an International Context* (NCES 2011-004). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

OECD (2011), *Against the odds: Disadvantaged students who succeed in school*. OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264090873-en>



Georgia's New Teacher Eval is on Autopilot: An interview with a teacher who participated in the pilot

Georgia has decided to move forward with a new teacher evaluation system, despite reported concerns (See <http://greater2012.blogspot.com/>) Below is a reprint of an interview shared by EmpowerED Georgia (<http://www.empoweredga.org/Articles/autopilot.html>) with a middle school science teacher in Metro Atlanta concerning the new Teacher Evaluation Pilot Program which was piloted at the teacher's school.

Background of the Pilot

What were your initial feelings toward participating in the pilot program? I do not think the current teacher evaluation system (made up of satisfactory and unsatisfactory ratings) is the best system. At first, I was very excited about seeing a new evaluation system that would better measure teacher quality and would help teachers improve as professionals.

How long did the pilot last? When did it start? The Teacher Evaluation System was piloted from January 2012 to May 2012 (originally, it was set to end in April, but had to be extended due to time constraints).

What are your thoughts on rolling it out so quickly? At the very least, the pilot should have been conducted for the entire year. A study that included multiple years would have been best. Overall, it seemed like they are putting the cart before the horse.

Did you and others at your school receive any training or professional development prior to the pilot? We had a half day of training (during the school year, so subs covered our classes) and it was conducted by our Principal. Another official was present (not sure if they were from the GA DOE or a researcher), but our Principal was the main facilitator of the training.

Details of the Pilot

What were the components of the pilot? The pilot consisted of student surveys (students were taken to the computer lab and the surveys were administered by someone else; surveys were completed for all classes; we were not told the results), classroom observations (done by our Principal; 2 total; 1 announced and 1 surprised; lasted 20-30 mins), and artifacts/documents (we were given a checklist; we did not receive any commentary when notebooks were handed back to us).

How were you rated? Instead of the old Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating scale, we were rated on a 5 indicator scale. I don't really think expanding the rating system to five indicators really provides enough feedback. Also, differences between indicators were not adequately explained.

How much did test scores count as your overall measurements? Importance of test scores were stressed, but we were never given specifics

How was value-added measurements calculated? Though we were told it would be part of the implemented evaluation system, this component was not piloted.

Were you given performance targets? When? No. We were told that this would be part of the implemented evaluation, but it was not part of the pilot.

How was measurement determined? Pre-tests were not given, but we did administer the CRCTs like normal.

From what you were told, how are the piloted evaluation and merit pay related? We were told that merit pay and the evaluation will be connected, but it was not during the pilot. We were not given any details.

Reflection

In your opinion, what were some strengths of the piloted teacher evaluation system? I appreciate that there is an effort to improve the teacher evaluation system, but I don't think the piloted system will do that. I think this new evaluation is going in the wrong direction.

In your opinion, what were some weaknesses of the piloted teacher evaluation system? The pilot seemed rushed. We were not given adequate feedback or information to improve the evaluation system.

Has your school received RTTT funds? If so, how has the funds been used? We have received funds, but I have not received any additional resources in the classroom.

Do you think the new teacher evaluation system will improve instruction? No. This is just creating more hoops that we will have to jump through. More time will be taken away from instruction and planning in order to satisfy paperwork and additional requirements.

If you were given input on what factors a new teacher evaluation system should include, what would these factors be? More observations. All components should be focused on providing support/feedback for teachers and increasing teacher quality. Other factors, such as class sizes, number of inclusion classes, amount of professional learner, number of preps, etc., should be consider as part of any new evaluation system.

Do you think the piloted evaluation system effectively identifies and improves weak teachers? No. Major components were not piloted. We did not receive enough feedback to improve instruction. It seemed as if the GA DOE was just going through the motions and the purpose of the pilot was not to test components or to improve the overall system.

News Watch

Common Core Curriculum & The New Teacher Evaluation by Cita Cook and Mary Anne Smith

Many teachers across the U. S. began this school year knowing that they would be expected to follow the new Common Core Curriculum Standards (CCCS) while also being evaluated by new methods of evaluating teachers, as mandated for all districts receiving Race to the Top (RTTT) funds. This does not mean, however, that anyone understood all that those changes would involve. This article is the first in a series that will continue as Georgia teachers experience the actuality of the new curriculum and teacher evaluation systems.

In 2009 the National Governors Association (led at the time by Georgia's Governor Perdue) and the Council of Chief State School Officers called for the creation of a public school curriculum that would standardize what is taught across the nation. Officially, the Common Core will, for the first time, enable students in all but the few states that have opted out to study the same curriculum. The promise that they will all graduate from high school more "college and career ready" than ever has inspired a wide range of organizations, from the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to the Chamber of Commerce, to praise the CCCS. Corporate-related supporters such as Bill Gates emphasize the potential for U. S. students to finally become more competitive with those from other nations. In addition, many educational services companies are thrilled about the new profits they expect to receive.

One uncertainty about what this new approach will mean in practice comes from the fact that the U.S.—unlike Japan, Finland, and other industrialized nations—allows each state to decide if and how to comply with federal education policies. Some voters are so openly suspicious of any federal mandate that state officials have been reassuring their constituencies that the Common Core Curriculum "is not a national curriculum." An additional complication concerning who is in charge comes from the requirement issued by the U. S. Department of Education that all districts receiving RTTT funds must adopt "standards and assessments that prepare

students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy" and develop new plans for assessing teachers. In effect, this has meant that the initial twenty-six RTTT districts in Georgia had to begin following the CCCS in the fall of 2012 and to use a new system to evaluate teachers, whether or not a clear and workable design existed for either project.

Determining how to implement all of this has involved frequent revisions and contradictory assertions by officials at each level of education and government. Official explanations of CCCS often assert that it is only a curriculum standards program that still allows local schools and teachers the freedom to determine how to seek the expected outcomes and has no necessary connections to other policies and programs. It is, nevertheless, tightly linked to and extremely affected by not only the regulations established by the RTTT program but also the requirements from various other bodies involved in the evaluation of students, teachers, school, and districts.

The Georgia Department of Education (GA DOE) has described the requirements of the CCCS as quite similar to those of the state's most recent Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) but also as "more rigorous." The new version is different enough to require a flurry of teacher training, whether through state webinars (which, when first piloted in Georgia, teachers criticized for not going into enough depth) or training sessions organized by districts in the summer and throughout the school year. Common Core advocates are proud that its requirement of "literacy across the curriculum" will add critical reading requirements to math and science classes, but some detractors have complained that the emphasis on non-fiction texts may shortchange fictional works. There have been predictions that students who are not reading at grade level by the end of the third grade will have extreme difficulty keeping up with the new curriculum, especially if they have to leave regular lessons for remediation. Even teachers who approve of the call to emphasize critical thinking and "high-level arguments" worry

Even teachers who approve of the call to emphasize critical thinking and "high-level arguments" worry about having enough time to do this while also preparing students for narrow standardized tests.

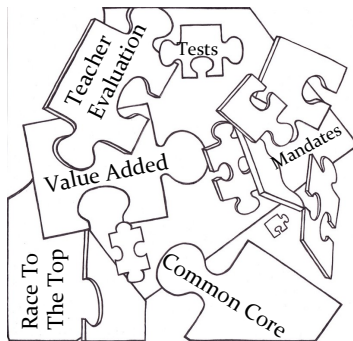
News Watch

Common Core Curriculum & The New Teacher Evaluation continued

about having enough time to do this while also preparing students for narrow standardized tests.

According to the GA DOE, "assessment is not supposed to drive curriculum," but the ability to follow the curriculum guidelines of the Common Core will be severely compromised if tests and other evaluation methods focus on different knowledge and skills. A large component of Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES or Teacher KEYS), already in place in some districts, involves "value added assessment," which is supposed to have the advantage of judging teachers according to how much their students improve rather than how close they came to a particular score. Although it does add more observations of teachers, TKES also continues to rely on the kind of testing that many studies have deemed improper for this use. [For discussion of concerns regarding TKES, see GREATER letter at <http://greater2012.blogspot.com/> or Spring/Summer 2012 GA NAME newsletter, v.2, issue 2. For an interview with a teacher involved in a pilot teacher evaluation program during the spring semester of 2012, see this issue p. 14.]

Government policy makers have too often called for substantive changes that never have a chance to succeed because they do not allow a gradual transition period. State officials, district and school administrators, and teachers have been trying to juggle so many new mandates that none of them has time to determine what is and is not working, much less how to fix the problems. All of these hurdles may be even more frustrating because much about the CCCS and even the TKES (IF it does not overemphasize test grades) has the possibility of leading to an education that many of us might gladly support. It would be a shame if careless and rushed implementation leads to this latest attempt to serve our students better becoming only one more failed experiment. We look forward to learning from you how the Common Core and Teacher KEYS are faring in different schools.



For more information, go to:

Georgia Department of Education, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/CCGPS.aspx>

Georgia Department of Education, Great Teachers and Leaders
<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Race-to-the-Top/Pages/Great-Teachers-and-Leaders.aspx>

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent, FAQ for Race to the Top in Georgia
<http://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/administration/RT3/110922-RT3-FAQ.pdf>

Common Core State Standards Initiative, Myths vs. Facts
<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts>

Arts and Education Exchange, "Linda Darling-Hammond Applauds CCSS"
<http://www.artseducationexchange.org/reporting-common-core-linda-darling-hammond-applauds-ccss>

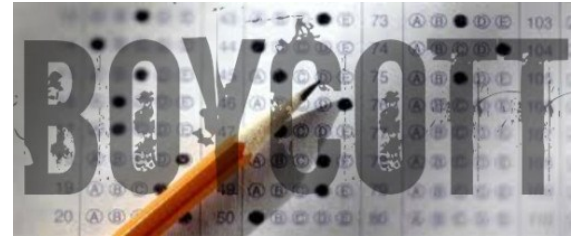
Diane Ravitch, "My View of the Common Core Standards"
<http://dianeravitch.net/2012/07/09/my-view-of-the-common-core-standards/>

Ronald A. Wolk, "common Core vs. Common Sense"
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/12/05/13wolk_ep.h32.html?tkn=SNRFRGtjYM7m81yy%2Fabgp8KwGOSGX4J7dvca&cmp=ENL-EU-VIEWS1

News Watch

Teachers Say “no” to Standardized Testing

Across the nation, teachers are pushing back and saying “no” to policies and practices they feel are undermining the quality of education for our students. Recently, teachers from Garfield High School in Seattle, Washington have been boycotting the use of high stakes standardized tests and their (mis)use in evaluating them as teachers. Over sixty educators and researchers have voiced their support of the Garfield teachers’ boycott of Seattle’s use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) by signing a statement that states:



**WE SUPPORT THE TEACHERS AT GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
HIGH STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTS ARE OVERUSED THE OVERRATED
THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS IS SPREADING**

To fulfill the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation, schools in all 50 states administer standardized tests to students, often beginning in third grade, in reading and math. Now, in response to the demands of Race to the Top* and the trend toward greater “accountability” in education, states are developing even more tests for more subjects. Standardized tests, once used primarily to assess student learning, have now become the main instrument for the high-stakes evaluation of teachers, administrators, and even entire schools and school systems.

The public statement goes on to provide research-based support for the following points:

- TESTS CONSUME A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND MONEY**
- TESTING HURTS STUDENTS**
- RESEARCH DOES NOT SUPPORT USING TESTS TO EVALUATE TEACHERS**
- EDUCATORS ARE TAKING A STAND FOR AUTHENTIC TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The statement has been signed by a variety of educators, scholars, researchers, and activists, including Kevin Kumashiro (current NAME president), Christine Sleeter (NAME past-president), Sonia Nieto, Jonathan Kozol, and Joel Spring. For the complete statement and full list of signers go to <http://seattleducation2010.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/leading-educators-support-garfield-high-school-teachers-test-boycott/> Support these teachers (whose jobs are being threatened) by contacting their superintendent contact: José Banda, Superintendent, (206) 252-0180 (phone), (206) 252-0209 (fax) or email: superintendent@seattleschools.org

For local efforts regarding the new teacher evaluation system and testing concerns, please see:

The GREATER letter of concern. In June 2012, a consortium of Georgia researchers and educators, *Georgia Researchers Educators, and Advocates for Teacher Evaluation Reform (GREATER)* consortium, signed an open letter of concern regarding GA's new teacher evaluation system, *Teacher/Leader Keys*, to Governor Nathan Deal, State Superintendent John Barge, and other key educational decision-makers in the state. GREATER states that research clearly shows that an overemphasis on test scores will *not* result in increased learning, increased well-being, or greater success. Georgia's GREATER efforts followed researchers and educators in Chicago, IL and New York State where similar evaluation methods are being implemented. A copy of the letter, including research references supporting GREATER's concerns and recommendations about pending implementation of the new teacher/leader evaluation system, can be found at <http://greater2012.blogspot.com/>

Chamblee Charter High School teachers in DeKalb County wrote to Superintendent John Barge regarding the Student Learning Objective (SLOs) aspect of the Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems and their concerns. Go to: <http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2012/09/26/the-more-time-spent-by-teachers-on-measuring-their-own-effectiveness-the-less-effective-the-teachers-become/>

A **petition** launched by Mr. Felts, a Riverdale teacher: Georgia Department of Education: Withdraw the Teacher Keys Evaluation System. Go to: http://www.change.org/petitions/georgia-department-of-education-withdraw-the-teacher-keys-evaluation-system?utm_source=supporter_message&utm_medium=email

*A US federal grant initiative that supports the use of standardized tests as a means of determining student and teacher success.

Educator Spotlight: GA NAME Appreciates Teachers

One gets a good sense about the state of teachers' lives today when a veteran teacher says the first time she has been appreciated in over a year is when her name is called as a raffle winner—and she was voted her school's Teacher of the Year last year! GA NAME sought to change that in a recent event aimed at appreciating teachers' dedication and hard work.

On Friday, September 14th, 2012 a group of teachers, teacher educators, and community advocates gathered at Manuel's Tavern in Atlanta for an after-school celebration, which we called TGIF-TGFE (Thank Goodness It's Friday, Thank Goodness For Educators). Thanks to donated space and refreshments from Manuel's, the group was in good spirits as the event began with a welcome from GA NAME President, Vera Stenhouse. Representatives of various organizations shared their gratitude for the teachers in the audience and informed everyone about their organizations' missions to serve and inspire educational equity. These organizations included EmpowerED Georgia, The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence at Georgia State University, Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS), and Project South.

The event concluded with a raffle of donated prizes, including two gift certificates for a two-night hotel getaway anywhere in the U.S., courtesy of Your Door to the World Travel, LLC., teaching resources, multicultural activities, and art supplies. Thanks to the generous donations of GA NAME friends and local businesses (see list to the right), we were able to ensure that each teacher who attended left with a small token of appreciation.



TGIF: THANK GOODNESS IT'S FRIDAY -
TGFE: THANK GOODNESS FOR EDUCATORS
APPRECIATION SOCIAL
 September 14, 2012 @ Manuel's Tavern

Thanks for all you do for our nation's children. We're glad you're here and in our schools. Gifts were donated by the groups and individuals listed below who wanted to show their appreciation.

American Institute for Managing Diversity

EmpowerED GA

Cleaning Carolyn, Professional Cleaning Service

Rethinking Schools

GA NAME

Hayes TEAM Consulting, Inc.

Project South

Marquita Jackson-Minot

Utrecht Art Supplies

Damon Peebles, CNN Media Operations

Demps Law Firm

*Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational
Excellence*

Janine Lock, Your Door to the World Travel

Manuel's Tavern



Have you thanked a teacher today?



Educator Spotlight: GA NAME Appreciates Teachers



Past Highlights



*The 22nd Annual International NAME Conference
November 28-December 1, 2012 in Philadelphia, PA*

Sponsored by

*Temple University's Office of Institutional
Diversity, Equity, Advocacy and Leadership*

Theme:

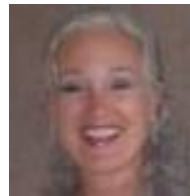
*Realizing the Power of Movements through Multicultural Education
www.nameorg.org*

Below is how our Members, Friends, and Leadership Team spent their time at NAME's 2012 Conference:

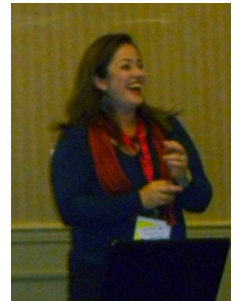


This fierce foursome, Jillian, Alyssa, Erica, and Mari, put the interactive in an interactive workshop as attendees overflowed the room to learn ways they could address the challenges of developing critically conscious multicultural educators.

Screening of *Precious Knowledge*
<http://www.preciousknowledgefilm.com/>



Many of us attended this featured event facilitated by NAME President Christine Sleeter. Sleeter's presence in the film reminded us of the important role that education researchers (should) have in informing education policies and issues.



Kara dazzled session attendees with an informative presentation on the Descriptive Review of the Child as a Tool for Developing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.



Here are Alyssa and Vera during NAME's award banquet honoring community members, practitioners, senior and emerging scholars whose efforts serve equity and justice for all.

OTHER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Our **Region 4 Meeting** featured our newly elected Regional Director, Otilia Salmón, and included NAME Founder & former member/founder of the Florida Chapter, G. Pritch Smith (both pictured at right).

For the second consecutive year, GA NAME facilitated the **Cross Chapter Dialog Session** that brings together NAME chapters from across all the regions to dialog, exchange ideas, trouble shoot, and offer tangible support. It is a needed and welcome opportunity to learn from each other, grow our work, and build our solidarity.

During **National's Board Meeting** we welcomed incoming president Kevin Kumishiro (pictured below right) and shared our gratitude to outgoing president Christine Sleeter. GA NAME thanks Sleeter and Kumishiro for their continued support and encouragement.

One of the last events on the last day was the **Visioning Forum**, an idea generating session aimed at seeking suggestions for NAME to pursue to nurture its mission, infrastructure, and organization activities.



Upcoming 2013 Events

March 29, 2013 University of Montevallo, Alabama

Acting, Advocating, and Allying for Socially Just Practices

The University of Montevallo Chapter of the National Association of Multicultural Education, in partnership with the UM Social Work Program, The Dave Mathews Center, and Safe Zone host the 3rd annual Alabama Region 4 Conference on Multicultural Education. This conference builds on the work of the national organization by seeking to "explore the role of multicultural education in movements toward equity and social justice at the local, national, and global levels."

April 20th 8:00am-4:30pm Georgia State University

Alonzo A. Crim Center's 8th Annual Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference

Wisdom, Work, Will: Advancing Educational Excellence. Please visit <http://education.gsu.edu/cuee/> for Call for Proposals and more information or call **404.413.8073**

Have an event you would like to add to our calendar? Email ganamecalendar@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE ALONZO A. CRIM CENTER FOR
URBAN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

2013 GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
TORCH OF PEACE AWARD RECIPIENTS
DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP AND
SERVICE THAT HONORS

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S
LEGACY TO "CREATE A MORE SOCIALLY
JUST WORLD."

JUMPSTART ATLANTA
STUDENT ORGANIZATION WINNER

BRIAN A. WILLIAMS
FACULTY AWARD WINNER

SINCE FREEDOM OF MIND AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ARE THE ROOT OF ALL FREEDOM, TO DENY FREEDOM IN EDUCATION IS A CRIME AGAINST DEMOCRACY.

~JOHN DEWEY,
ARCHITECT IN ADVANCING ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN EDUCATION

Submission Guidelines

Submit to

ganame2010@gmail.com Subject line:
Newsletter Submission

Your submission will be reviewed and considered for the newsletter and subject to editorial edits by Newsletter Team members. The content will be vetted by several factors including alignment with chapter/national mission, quality of the representation of ideas, language bias, and length.

Format

Submissions should follow the following format:

Include title of article, name of author(s), any affiliation(s), and contact information for lead contact person (email/phone)

Indicate section of newsletter for submission (See Sections for Submission.)

250-600 typewritten words (for written submissions)

12 point font (Times New Roman or Old Century Schoolbook)

Language/Terminology: Please refer to APA 6th edition for Reducing Bias in Language <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/14/>

Use of citations/References where appropriate (Include reference list)

Prior permission must be secured for use of visual images

Sections for Submissions

News Watch

Features commentary on current/timeless educational issues. Commentary must first include the various perspectives on the issues followed by the author's position and supporting argument.

Doing the Work: Educator, Community, Research

Spotlight on educators/teaching, organization in the community, or researcher(s) doing critical work on matters related to education.

Visual Art

Visual commentary on educational issues in the form of graphic art/cartoons.

Additional Arts representation

Arts-based commentary offered through including but not limited to poetry, monologues, written music/lyrics, and so forth.

Book Reviews

Reviews of books to inform and supplement understanding of ideas, concepts, and issues. Reviews should connect practice and theory.

Resource Highlights

Detail resources for birth-5 and families, educators, and students relevant to Multicultural Education

International/Global

Address issues in global/international education that affect local and national education trends in the U.S.

Content

Submissions should address the following considerations:

- ◆ Must speak to excellence and equity in education.
- ◆ May offer issues, concerns, or problems but must include solutions and problem solving ideas/initiatives or critical questions for further inquiry.
- ◆ Links to the genres of multicultural education within or across your content area/sphere of influence.



Upcoming Submission Themes & 2013 Due Dates

◆ Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Practice

February 15

◆ Mentoring

March 15

