



# TEN NEWSLETTER

Bimonthly Newsletter of the  
Transformative Education Network  
at Montclair State University

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## SOCIAL ACTION: TEACH THE TRUTH DAY OF ACTION

This year we have been highlighting Dr. Picower's Six elements of Social Justice. We have finally reached element six, social action. Social action is often the culmination of social justice lessons having been embedded throughout the curriculum. Element 6 requires the groundwork of elements 1-5 to help students embody ways to make lasting change. To take action, "Students identify issues they feel passionate about and learn the skills of creating change firsthand" (Picower, 2012). One thing students can come to realize through learning about Element 6 is the difference between individual and collective action. While both are important, prioritizing individual action can often leave students feeling as though the weight of fixing the problems they face rests on their shoulders alone. This can let governments and systems of oppression off the hook by relying on individuals to resolve systemic problems. Through social action, students learn to connect with others that are also working to solve the problems they care about.

When discussing anti-CRT and anti LGBTQI book bans occurring around the country today, many teachers respond with, "I would just close my door and teach what I know is right!" While that type of individual activism is important for the group of students in front of you, it does not combat the systematic attacks on historically accurate and representative education that are rising up around the country.

This year TEN is getting involved in **collective action** on June 10th by participating in Teach the Truth NJ. The systematic attacks on education, specifically the banning of books by and about Black, brown, queer, or gender diverse people, and attacks on curriculum, specifically teaching truthful representations of race and accurate history, are not going away. Teachers are being fired and targeted by school boards and parents that don't want their children learning about the effects of racism in this country (NBC News). While attacks such as these have affected at least 18 states and are threatening many more, teachers, students, and families that care about education are willing to work together to take action against this. TEN invites us all to join the collective action of Teach the Truth Day, which is happening on June 10th nationally. TEN will gather at Harriet Tubman Square in Newark from 12-3.

This is just one way of many that people are taking action against what is going on in education today. Other ways to take action include: signing petitions, supporting the students who are rallying at school board meetings, sharing your voice during school board hearings and in other public forums, supporting BIPOC and LGBTQ authors, and, yes, continuing to teach the truth every day and fight for all teachers and students to have this right.



# SPOTLIGHT ON...

# UPCOMING EVENTS



Brandie Waid



Leah Owens

Teach Truth Day of Action  
June 10 Location: Harriet Tubman Square  
• 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm EST

New Teacher Induction: End-of-Year Happy Hour  
June 16 Location: Just Jake's  
• 3:30 - 5:30 pm EST

2023 MSUNER Summer Conference  
June 26 University Hall 7th Floor  
• 9:00 am - 3:30 pm EST

## How and why did you get involved with TEN?

**L:** I met Dr. Picower (co-director of TEN) at least 10 years ago. She was a teacher in New York City and was organizing with a social justice group. We also worked more directly together when I was a (field team member) for TEN. The Teach the Truth Day of Action came up as an opportunity to organize with other organizations statewide.

**Brandie:** We connected with Bree through our first summer collaborative conference in 2021. We wanted to create a sustainable space for anti-racist meetings and initiatives. We noticed that many educators were engaging in anti-racist practices after the murder of George Floyd, but we knew it wouldn't last without sustained support.

## What is your "why" for antiracist/social justice education?

**B:** For me, it started before I moved to New York City and came out as queer. I was anxious and afraid to step out of my comfort zone. But once I came out, I saw the impact and gained more confidence. I realized that schools limit students' identities whether it's their race, gender, disability, or immigration status. I wanted to create a space where students could be their full selves. The purpose of education, for me, is creating a democratic society and preparing young people to engage critically with the world and shape the world they want to see.

**L:** I've been involved in education justice for about 15 years. My organizing was driven by theory and what I was learning during my studies. I was part of various organizations... But I encountered a lot of barriers and felt frustrated with the lack of commitment to change. It pushed me to explore more theory and learn about organizing and building relationships. I also experienced personal challenges, which led me to prioritize sustainability and wellness. Despite the difficulties, it strengthened my commitment to anti-racist work because I recognized the urgent need for it.

## Why teach the truth?

**L:** It's important to teach the truth because when students are exposed to information without critical thinking skills, we perpetuate the existing system and status quo. I used to teach without considering different perspectives, but now I emphasize that these are all perspectives and ask my students which ones they want to own. Teaching the truth is central for me.

**B:** Teaching the truth is crucial for creating a democratic society and preparing young people to critically engage with the world and shape it according to their vision. If we don't teach the truth, we deprive students of the tools and confidence they need. When marginalized groups don't see themselves represented in accurate history, it causes internal struggle. I run a summer camp where we teach LGBT history beyond the usual tragedies. We explore stories like men forming relationships during the gold rush. We need to expand the truth and reclaim stories like José Sarria, a Latin drag queen who ran for office before Harvey Milk.

## What is one change you would like to see in public education?

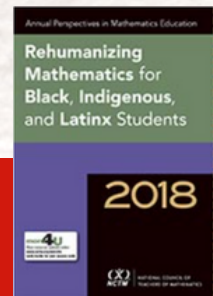
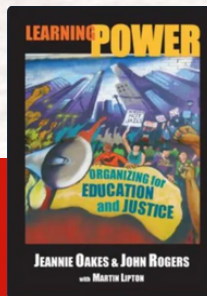
**B:** I think a lot of my frustration with the larger picture of what's happening in public education is that everyone thinks they know what it means to be a teacher or to learn curriculum and what's important... Just because you went to school doesn't mean you know. I wish that politicians didn't make decisions for public education, at all.

**L:** One thing that I wish would change about public education is that it was actually about education. Education, for me, is discovering for oneself. So I would wish that were a central theme in public education. The focus should not be on standardized assessments, graduation rates, and other statistics. The focus should be on learning and how students can think critically.

## What's the book that changed your life?

**L:** [Learning Power](#) by Jeannie Oakes and John Roger

**B:** [Rehumanizing Mathematics for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Students](#) by Imani Goffney and Rochelle Gutiérrez





# TEN HONORS

# Winners

For commitment to  
Racial and  
Social Justice Education

# Congratulations!



Katie Krommenhoek



Carl Savage

## SOCIAL ACTION: HOW TO GET INVOLVED



**Mapso Freedom Schools** is a community-based organization in Maplewood and South Orange, New Jersey, that aims to create spaces for young people to learn about social justice and activism. They offer summer programs focused on critical thinking, leadership development, and community engagement.



**Ironbound Community Corporation** is focused on empowering residents and promoting social justice. They offer a wide range of services, including affordable housing, health programs, and community organizing. You can get involved by attending their meetings, volunteering, or supporting their campaigns.



**Make the Road** advocates for immigrant and workers' rights. They provide legal support, educational programs, and community organizing efforts. To get involved, you can join their campaigns, attend their events, or volunteer in their various programs.

### ORGANIZATIONS

#### Black Lives Matter Paterson

**Black Lives Matter Paterson** is a local chapter of the global movement that advocates for racial justice and an end to systemic racism. Get involved by attending community events, supporting their initiatives, and amplifying their message through social media.

#### education for liberation network

**EdLib** is dedicated to promoting educational equity and social justice in schools. They provide resources and training for educators to create inclusive learning environments, and you can get involved by attending their workshops and using their materials to foster equitable practices in your classroom.



**Clinton Hill Community Action** provide various programs and services, including education, job training, and affordable housing initiatives. To get involved, you can volunteer, donate, or participate in their community events.

### RESOURCES

**Learning for Justice** offers a valuable lesson on utilizing social media for social action.



**"Where Are the Climate Change Superheroes?"** by the Zinn Education Project offers educators a thought-provoking lesson plan to engage students in discussions about climate change.

**The article "Planting Seeds of Solidarity"** from **Rethinking Schools** highlights the importance of social activism in the classroom and provides practical ideas for fostering solidarity among students.



#### The Radical Pedagogy Institute

advocates for transformative and socially just education that challenges traditional teaching practices. Educators can attend their workshops, conferences, and training sessions, providing valuable opportunities for professional development and networking with like-minded teachers.





# DID YOU KNOW?



New Jersey is participating in Teach Truth Day of Action on June 10, 2023. Here are some ways to get involved! Click [here](#) to view a video that highlights Teach Truth Day of Action featuring TEN Cohort 3!

## Teach Truth Day of Action June 10, 2023

Teach Truth Day, a powerful grassroots movement that works with Zinn Education Project and other social justice teaching organizations, has gained momentum over the past two summers. Passionate educators unite at historic sites nationwide to stand against anti-history education bills and make a resounding commitment to teach the truth. These teacher-led rallies garnered significant attention from the national media, offering a vital counter-narrative to the well-funded anti-CRT movement that has dominated the discourse.



### Locations in NJ to join

Click [here](#) for more information



## TEACH TRUTH NJ

Support LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC students



Resist Book Bans and anti-CRT proposals

Calling all students, educators and community members to rally for teaching truth in our schools and communities.

JOIN US AT ANY OF THESE LOCATIONS  
SATURDAY JUNE 10, 2023

HARRIET TUBMAN STATUE - NEWARK  
ROSEDALE ICE SKATING RINK - MADISON  
T. THOMAS FORTUNE CULTURAL CENTER-RED BANK  
PRINCETON BATTLE MONUMENT - PRINCETON



For accommodations and to find specific locations/times, please RSVP to Radical Pedagogy Institute using the QR code.

We encourage attendees to wear a mask for the safety and health of all of our community members



### How to get your classroom involved in the movement: Activity Ideas

- Make Teach Truth photo frames
- Convene at a Historic Site with #Teach Truth signs
- Participate or host a walking tour around your city/town introducing the history of the community
- Create "I pledge" to Teach Truth signs and why it is important
- Host a book swap to exchange literature that has influenced your understanding of U.S. history

