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May 5, 2022

IDRA's Knowledge is Power is a national resource for educators and advocates to help you do your work for equity and excellence in education in the midst of classroom censorship policies.

In this edition...

- Letters Demand Books Returned to Shelves in Four School Districts
- What is in Georgia's Classroom Censorship Law
- Censorship Laws Don't Support Student's Real Needs – Student Testimony
- Cultivating Conscientization in the Classroom - Webinar May 11
- Advocacy Tools

See previous editions of [Knowledge is Power](#) and related resources online.



## Letters Demand Books Returned to Shelves in Four School Districts

*by Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.*

IDRA wholeheartedly signed on to letters submitted by the ACLU of Texas detailing the recent actions taken by [Granbury ISD](#), [Katy ISD](#), [Klein ISD](#) and [North East ISD](#) to censor the stories and voices of primarily Black and LGBTQ+ communities and the legal implications of the school districts' efforts. The letters demand the return of the books to library shelves, in addition to requesting that the districts acknowledge the harm caused by these actions and ensure that they follow established policies for reviewing book challenges in the future.

Examples of books targeted for removal include the following, most of which are highly acclaimed, award-winners (see \*).

## The United States' history of racism

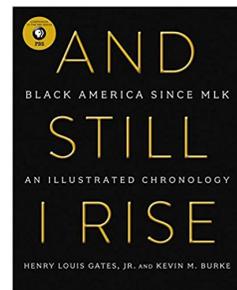
- **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents**, by Isabel Wilkerson\*
- **Citizen: An American Lyric**, by Claudia Rankine\*
- **Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet**, by Andrea Chang\*
- **Everything You Love Will Burn: Inside the Rebirth of White Nationalism in America**, by Vegas Tenold
- **The New Jim Crow**, by Michelle Alexander\*
- **Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation**, by Duncan Tonatiuh\*
- **Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America**, by Ibram X. Kendi\*
- **Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You**, by Ibram X. Kendi
- **They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group**, by Susan Bartoletti\*
- **This Is Your Time**, by Ruby Bridges\*

RUBY BRIDGES  
THIS IS YOUR TIME



## Prominent books by Black women authors with themes of race and racism

- **And Still I Rise**, by Maya Angelou\*
- **Beloved**, by Toni Morrison\*
- **The Bluest Eye**, by Toni Morrison
- **Homegoing**, by Yaa Gyasi\*

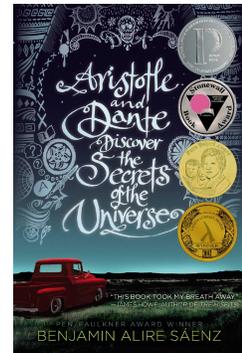


## Anti-Black police brutality

- **All American Boys**, by Jason Reynolds\*
- **Ghost Boys**, by Jewell Parker Rhodes\*
- **The Hate U Give**, by Angie Thomas\*

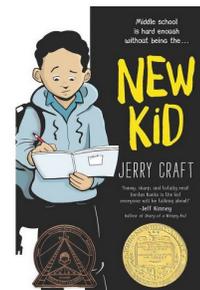
## Fiction centered on LGBTQ+ and Black and brown characters and plotlines

- **Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, by Benjamin Alire Sáenz\*
- **Ash**, by Malinda Lo\*
- **The Breakaways**, by Cathy Johnson\*
- **Class Act**, by Jerry Craft
- **Princess Princess Ever After**, by Kay O'Neil\*
- **Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy: A Modern Graphic Retelling of Little Women**, by Ray Terцерio
- **Monday's Not Coming**, by Tiffany Jackson\*
- **Out of Darkness**, by Ashley Hope Pérez\*



## LGBTQ+ and racial inclusivity

- **Gender Identity: The Ultimate Teen Guide (It Happened to Me)**, by Cynthia Winfield
- **In Our Mothers' House**, by Patricia Polacco\*
- **New Kid**, by Jerry Craft\*
- **Pride: Celebrating Diversity & Community**, by Robin Stevenson\*

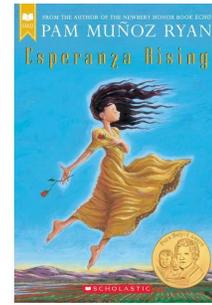


## LGBTQ+ issues

- **Gay Issues and Politics: Marriage, the Military, & Work Place Discrimination**, by Jaime Seba
- **Gender Identity: The Search for Self**, by Kate Light
- **Transgender Rights and Protections**, by Rebecca T. Klein
- **V for Vendetta**, by Alan Moore\*
- **The Year They Burned the Books**, by Nancy Garden\*

### Immigrant and refugee experiences

- [Esperanza Rising](#), by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- [Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood](#), by Marjane Satrapi\*
- [Refugee](#), by Alan Gratz\*



### The Holocaust

- [Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation](#), by Ari Folman\*
- [Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History](#), by Art Spiegelman\*
- [Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began](#), by Art Spiegelman\*
- [Night](#), by Elie Wiesel\*

### Foundational civil and human rights legal principles

- [The Cider House Rules](#), by John Irving
- [Equal Rights \(What Do We Mean by Human Rights\)](#), by Maureen O'Connor, a book about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- [Roe v. Wade: A Woman's Choice](#), by Susan Dudley Gold
- [Roe v. Wade: The Untold Story of the Landmark Supreme Court Decision that Made Abortion Legal](#), by Marian Faux

### Sex education

- [100 Questions You'd Never Ask Your Parents](#), by Elisabeth Henderson
- [Safe Sex 101: An Overview for Teens](#), by Margaret O. Hyde

\* *award-winning book*



## What is in Georgia's Classroom Censorship Law

One week ago, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed the state's new restrictive education law that targets students by censoring conversations and teaching about race and racism. It also excludes transgender girls from participating in school sports.

Specifically, the law does the following:

- redefines legitimate interpretations of racism and bias as "divisive concepts;"
- restricts discussion about racism and bias in teacher training and certification;
- changes the complaint process for objecting to curricula and classroom instruction;
- increases administrative burdens for school boards and administrators;
- threatens school flexibility and autonomy by restricting strategic waivers for districts found to be teaching "divisive concepts;"
- increases political influence in statewide athletic associations; and
- makes it harder for school districts to protect transgender student athletes.

See [What Does Georgia's House Bill 1084 Do?](#), our one-pager with a breakdown of the law and its components.

[IDRA, ACLU of Georgia and the Southern Poverty Law Center](#) held a press conference when the Governor signed the law. Watch [press conference video](#).



**Calling all Educators!**

# ONLINE SURVEY

Let us know how classroom censorship policies are impacting you in your classroom.

<https://idra.news/CensorshipStories>



Easy Form: How is classroom censorship affecting you?



## Censorship Laws Don't Support Student's Real Needs – Student Testimony

by Alex Ames

*Editor's Note: Georgia students testified against HB 1084 in the Georgia General Assembly. Below is the testimony presented by Alex Ames to the House Education Academic Innovation Subcommittee on February 9, 2022. The bill was signed into law on April 28, 2022.*

Good afternoon senators. My name is Alex. My parents are public school teachers. I am a graduate of public schools. My siblings go there as well. When I left campus for several hours on Monday to testify against a bill very similar to this one, I heard the author – like this author – say that the bill is meant to get it in front of a major emergency proactively.

But I'll tell you what actual kids in Georgia schools are experiencing. My friend Lily never had a teacher who looked like her until grade ten. My friend, Arwin, had teachers tell him that immigrants, like his family, didn't belong in our country. My friend, Adduni, had one counselor for 700 kids.

And these are the actual emergencies facing all kids in Georgia schools, especially Black, immigrant and impoverished students, not mis-manufactured emergencies to excuse politicians



meddling in the classroom. My white professor, a former legislator, showed us a video of a Klansman and other white supremacists holding a rally in Forsyth County in 1987. Did I feel bad as a white person learning this? I felt bad not because my skin looks like this, but because bad things happen to human beings.

I was also proud of my professor for standing up against the Klan in a counter-protest. Is it wrong for our children to learn what is right, to know that genocide and enslavement were, in fact, horrific?

How can we emphasize how far we have come as a country without acknowledging the truthful history of our state?

Under this bill, that lesson would be banned because it discusses systemic racism reinforced by our government and because the people who marched for white supremacy aren't history, they are alive today. Censorship steals funds and opportunities from kids just trying to find their own opinions in the world.

For our sake, do not pass this bill. There are many other things you can do to support children. This is not one of them.



## Cultivating Conscientization in the Classroom – Webinar May 11

The banner features a blue background with yellow and orange accents. At the top, it says "Free Webinar" in white. Below that, the title "Cultivating Conscientization in the Classroom" is written in large white letters. Underneath the title, the date and time "Wednesday, May 11, 2022 • 11:00-Noon (cst)" are listed. Two circular portraits of speakers are shown: a man with glasses and a goatee on the left, and a woman with long brown hair on the right. The background includes decorative elements like musical notes, a paper airplane, and dashed lines. The IDRA logo is in the bottom right corner.

Conscientization, also known as “critical consciousness” is a popular education and social concept developed by Brazilian pedagogue and educational theorist, Paulo Freire (1970). Research shows that higher critical consciousness is associated with higher self-esteem, higher political engagement, higher professional aspirations, academic engagement and even higher academic achievement.

Dr. Victor Lozada is currently using Freire’s concept of conscientization in his elementary music classroom to discuss the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. He uses many children’s books and music to discuss social change.

In this webinar, you will learn about Freire's concept of conscientization and how to use books and music to teach critical consciousness in the classroom.

In addition to teaching music at a Denton ISD elementary school, Dr. Victor Lozada is an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Texas at Dallas and a graduate research associate at Texas Woman's University.

**Register Now!**



## Advocacy Tools

**IDRA Southern Education Equity Network**

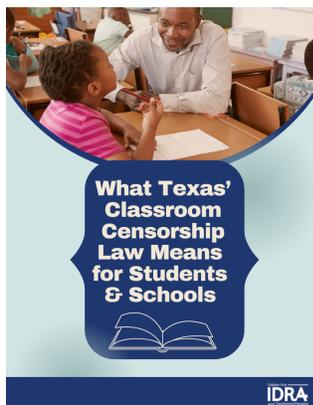
A community forum and resource hub for advocates of strong inclusive public education

- Get advocacy how-to tools
- Share policy & action updates
- Plan actions with your group

[www.idrasedn.org](http://www.idrasedn.org)

**IDRA** [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) @IDRAed @IDRAedu Intercultural Development Research Association

Visit the SEEN website and join a group!



## Guide to Texas Classroom Censorship Bill

IDRA's detailed guide of the Texas law (Senate Bill 3) contains our analysis and interpretation for how components of the law affect teachers and school personnel and what this means for continuing to teach the truth in schools. Educators should still consult with their district administration for local policies and procedures related to instruction, curriculum and school activities.

See Texas SB 3 School Guide

## Lessons Learned from our Classroom Censorship Advocacy

We actively opposed classroom censorship policies, including leading a large coalition in Texas, participating in national strategy meetings, and working with partners to oppose bills filed in Georgia. As our fellow advocacy organizations continue to fight against classroom censorship in their states and communities, our hope is that the lessons we learned and tools we used in our advocacy can help support others' inclusive, community-centered work.



See Advocacy Guide (PDF)



## Building Supportive Schools from the Ground Up

IDRA's report highlights how school districts can use federal funds to invest in strategies that ensure culturally-sustaining schools for all students. The strategies were identified during IDRA's community sessions with young people, families, advocates and other education experts.

See Report PDF



IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

Reach Out To Us

