

# The F.A.C.E of Justice Newsletter

Monthly highlights of news, ideas, and research for educators and practitioners working towards transformative communities.

Editor: Loraine R. Snead

---

## In this Issue:

1. [One University's Response to Supreme Court's Affirmative Action Decision](#)
  2. [Ta-Nehisi Coates Shows Up at a South Carolina School Board Meeting](#)
  3. [How to Resist Book Bans and Reclaim Inclusivity](#)
- 

## 1. One University's Response to Supreme Court's Affirmative Action Decision



Figure 1: [Courtesy of Pixabay.com](#)

After the Supreme Court declared that race could not be used as a factor for college admission in June of this year, the University of North Carolina (UNCC) announced another way to reach its diversity initiatives. In an article in *Associated Press in July 2023*, Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz declared that starting with the incoming class of 2024, UNCC will offer free tuition and fees to students from North Carolina whose families earn less than \$80,000 per year. Chancellor Guskiewicz said, "We want to make sure students know financial constraints should not stand in the way of their dreams."

Read more: "[After Supreme Court decision, university to offer free tuition to some in-state students](#)" by *The Associated Press (AP US News)* Published July 7, 2023.

---

## 2. Ta-Nehisi Coates Shows Up at a South Carolina School Board Meeting



Figure 2: [Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0](#)

The award-winning author of *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates, attended a South Carolina school board meeting on July 17, 2023, to support a teacher from Chapin High School in Chapin, SC using his book in her classroom. The teacher, Mary Wood, assigned Coates' book for reading and discussion in an Advanced Placement English class. Wood asked the students to read the book and watch videos on systemic racism. Afterward, the students were asked to discuss and support their opinions with evidence from the reading and videos. Two students wrote a note to a school board member stating they felt uncomfortable and "ashamed to be Caucasian." The books were collected from the students in the class by the English department chair, thus ending the assignment. Despite the outrage and call to fire the teacher from several community members, the school board reiterated that the book, *Between the*

*World and Me* "is not banned from the SC Lexington-Richmond District 5 schools. Coates did not comment in the meeting nor respond to reporters' requests. The school board has taken no action, and the issue was not voted on at the meeting.

Read more: "Author Ta-Nehisi Coates Appears at School Board Meeting," *Chicago Defender*, <https://chicagodefender.com>, July 17, 2023.

### 3. How to Resist Book Bans and Reclaim Inclusivity



Figure 3: [Courtesy of Pixabay.com](#)

In this *Literacy Today* article, Daniel Liou and Kelly Deits Cutler offer a five-practice critical inclusivity framework for education leaders to consider when reclaiming inclusive curriculum and resisting excluding literacy freedom. The authors stated that “book banning fundamentally undermines individuals’ literacy development and ability to affirm and challenge one’s beliefs and assumptions.” Reading books about the histories and experiences of marginalized groups, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people, are essential for creating inclusive and equitable learning spaces. Their suggested practices are:

- *Research student and community voices* – partnering with the local community members to secure safe places to read and sustain literacy rights when public libraries ban books. Support community efforts, especially student-led groups implementing creative ways to foster access to banned books. For example, the Intellectual Freedom Teen Council in Brooklyn, NY, created social media spaces where teens share resources and advocate for other teens across the nation. Or, in Forsyth County, GA, where students protested the removal of books from their schools and libraries and have organized to stop censorship.
- *Read the books* – the only way to know if the complainants and district personnel have valid points and factual interpretations of the books, read them in their entirety. Hold community forums to discuss the banned books and have naysayers support their claims with evidence.
- *Reinforce legal precedent and formal reviews* – many legal precedents in the United States protect students’ rights to books and literacy, not excluding the First Amendment of the U.S. Legal precedents have allowed school districts to develop formal processes to review books under scrutiny by community organizations and include these organizations in the committees.
- *Reemphasize relevancy* – School and district leaders must be clear about how books’ themes and content tie back to state standards. Literary standards offer benchmarks encouraging teachers to connect curriculum to student identities and lived experiences.
- *Reaffirm expectations for inclusivity* – The authors state that “from an equity perspective, book banning targeting specific populations can induce a sense of superiority and inferiority and affect students’ standing in the community. Indeed, the impact of book bans goes far beyond just censorship of literature and the right to read. The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recently investigated a complaint against Forsyth County Schools in GA for allegedly creating a hostile environment for some students based on race, gender identity, and national origin. Because the students did not have access to read books where Black and LGBTQIA+ people were the main characters, their education was effectively separate and unequal. Schools and districts must reassess and reaffirm their equity and inclusivity statements and values.

Read more: “Key Lessons From Book Bans” by Daniel D. Liou and Kelly Deits Cutler in *Literacy Today*, July/August/September 2023 [www.literacyworldwide.org](http://www.literacyworldwide.org)

This email was sent by Community Wellness Institute, 1919 Lee Street, Evanston, IL 60202. You received this message because you participated in a workshop or other event hosted by Community Wellness Institute. If this email was forwarded to you by someone else and you wish to subscribe to our email list, please click the link below. If you wish to stop receiving emails from Community Wellness Institute please click [unsubscribe](#).

---

[Subscribe to Community Wellness Institute](#)

---

[Change your Email](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) |

---

© 2023 Community Wellness Institute, LLC – All rights reserved.