

18th Annual Northwest Teaching for Social Justice Conference



**Rethinking Our Classrooms,
Organizing for Better Schools**

Parkrose High School
12003 N.E. Shaver St.
Portland, Oregon

Sponsored by: Portland Association of Teachers, Seattle Education Association, and *Rethinking Schools* magazine

Teaching for Social Justice in the Pacific Northwest: The folks who created this conference

Organized by: Northwest Teaching for Social Justice Conference Organizing Committee. In 2007, a group of educators from Portland, Olympia, and Seattle attended the Teachers 4 Social Justice annual conference at Mission High School in San Francisco. It was an inspiring gathering put on by committed social justice educators volunteering their time to build community and knowledge. Our small group met after the conference and concluded: “Let’s try to do a conference like this in the Northwest.” Today, 18 years later, we carry on this tradition. If you would like to be part of organizing next year’s annual NWTSJ Conference, please write us at info@nwtsj.org. We welcome colleagues to join us who embrace the social justice goals of Rethinking Schools, which is “dedicated to sustaining and strengthening public education through social justice teaching and education activism.” NWTSJ strives to “promote equity and racial justice in the classroom. We encourage grassroots efforts in our schools and communities to enhance the learning and well-being of our children, and to build broad democratic movements for social and environmental justice.” We work for peace and justice not only in the United States, but throughout the world, and oppose war, militarism, colonialism, and occupation.

Sponsors

Rethinking Schools

Rethinking Schools is a national publisher of educational materials — books like *Teaching Palestine*, *Transgender Justice in Schools*, *Teacher Unions and Social Justice*, *Teaching for Black Lives*, *The New Teacher Book*, *Rethinking Multicultural Education*, *A People's Curriculum for the Earth*, *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*, *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*, *Rethinking Bilingual Education*, and *Rethinking Columbus*, as well as the quarterly magazine, *Rethinking Schools*. It is committed to the vision that public education is central to the creation of a humane, caring, multiracial democracy. Rethinking Schools also coordinates the Zinn Education Project, www.zinnedproject.org, with Teaching for Change. Rethinking Schools seeks to balance classroom practice and broader education activism. *Rethinking Schools* magazine articles are written by and for teachers, teacher educators, parents, and students. See www.rethinkingschools.org for more information. Please subscribe.

Portland Association of Teachers

The Portland Association of Teachers represents more than 4,000 professional educators in the Portland Public Schools system. PAT works to create the best possible learning environment for our students, by protecting our profession and advocating for frontline educators. The union has been a supporter of the NWTSSJ conference for many years, and PAT teachers have led NWTSSJ workshops and served on the NWTSSJ organizing committee. www.pdxteachers.org/

Seattle Education Association

The Seattle Education Association (SEA) represents more than 6,000 education staff working for the Seattle Public Schools. This includes both certificated and classified staff and is the largest local in the Washington Education Association. SEA members have played key roles in the organization of the NWTSSJ Conference over the past several years. www.seattlewea.org/

Welcome to the 18th Annual Northwest Teaching for Social Justice Conference

“Rethinking Our Classrooms, Organizing for Better Schools”

**Saturday, October 18, 2025
Parkrose High School
Portland, Oregon**

Welcome and Opening Keynote	9:00–10:00
Walidah Imarisha “Memories and Dreams of Change”	
Workshop Session #1	10:30–12:00
Lunch	12:00–1:00
Workshop Session #2	1:00–2:30
Closing Keynote	2:45–3:30
Jesse Hagopian “Teach Truth: The Struggle for Antiracist Education”	
Affinity Space, Themed Discussions, Open Rooms	3:40–4:10
Clean-up party for all	Post-conference

Keynote Speakers

Morning Keynote: Walidah Imarisha **“Memories and Dreams of Change”**

Walidah Imarisha is the director of the Center for Black Studies and Associate Professor in the Black Studies Department at Portland State University. She is the co-editor of two anthologies, *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* and *Another World Is Possible*. Imarisha is also the author of *Angels with Dirty Faces: Three Stories of Crime, Prison and Redemption*, which won a 2017 Oregon Book Award. She spent six years with the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project as a public scholar facilitating programs across the state about Oregon Black History and other topics. In 2015, she received a Tiptree Fellowship for her science fiction writing.

Afternoon Keynote: Jesse Hagopian **“Teach Truth: The Struggle for Antiracist Education”**

Jesse Hagopian taught in the public schools for more than 20 years and founded the Ethnic Studies course at Seattle’s Garfield High School. He is a Rethinking Schools editor, on the staff of the Zinn Education Project, and a columnist for Truthout. He is the author of *Teach Truth: The Struggle for Antiracist Education*, as well as the co-editor of the Rethinking Schools books *Teaching for Black Lives*, *Teacher Unions and Social Justice*, and *Teaching Palestine*. He edited *More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High Stakes Testing*. Hagopian serves on the Black Lives Matter at School national steering committee.

Workshops

Workshop sign-ups will open on Sched (nwtjsj2025.sched.com) on Thursday, October 16th, at 7 pm Pacific.

Session #1: 10:30 – 12:00

The Anti-Defamation League Is Not a Social Justice Partner — Here Is How We Get Them Out of Schools

Awareness that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is problematic is increasing, but many can't articulate how the ADL causes harm. This interactive workshop will demonstrate in concrete terms why the ADL should be removed from schools for both political and pedagogical reasons. It will empower participants to speak about the ADL so they can engage effectively with educators and policymakers. It will explore strategic considerations that may inform different approaches in different schools and districts. (General, Parents/Caregivers)

*Nora Lester Murad is an activist, educator, and the author of the award-winning young adult novel, *Ida in the Middle*. Nora is a member of the core organizing team of the campaign to Drop the ADL from Schools.*

Bearing Witness: Anti-war Voices in a Militaristic Curriculum and World

War appears throughout social studies curricula and media. Victors' and generals' stories are oft told, but personal stories more often bring our understanding of war to life. Through the process of bearing witness to guest speaker testimonies, participants will expand their understanding of recent wars and military service, reflecting on diverse ways our lives are impacted by militarism and ways in which individuals and groups are actively working against that force. (Secondary, General)

Paige Hazard teaches Modern World History and IB Anthropology at Cleveland High School in Portland. Guest speakers include U.S. military veterans of the Vietnam War and post-9/11 wars and anti-war activists representing a variety of organizations including the War Resisters League, About Face, and Veterans for Peace, each of whom have chapters across North America.

Combatting the Erasure of Queer and Trans Lives in Mathematics

Mathematics is often touted as culture- and value-free, yet we have seen year after year that individuals from historically marginalized groups, including queer and trans people, opt out of pursuing mathematics degrees. In this interactive workshop participants will explore how mathematics curriculum contributes to the erasure of queer and trans people and how teachers can engage students in critical mathematical analyses to explore and combat that erasure. (PK–16, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, General, Teacher Educators)

***B Waid** (they/them/elle) is an Assistant Professor of Secondary Education at California State University, Fullerton, and a former middle and high school mathematics teacher. As a queer, disabled, Latinx scholar, activist, and educator, their research and teaching focuses on how students' intersectional identities manifest in mathematical spaces and how to re/humanize mathematics for all students using critical, queer, and anti-racist pedagogy, as well as a lens of disability justice.*

Community Circles: Rooted in Relationships

Our vision of liberation prioritizes the power of a collective community over the limitations of an individualistic society. Moving toward an educational system that works for all students requires reimagining our approaches to building student engagement and connection. Our community circles (problem-solving class meetings) are designed to empower students to solve both community and individual problems. This practice builds a culture where problem-solving becomes a shared, collaborative process. In this session, participants will learn practical strategies for integrating community circles into their daily routines. Grounded in restorative practices, trauma-responsive approaches, social emotional learning, and neuroscience-based research, our model creates inclusive learning environments where students are empowered to lead and thrive. (Elementary, Middle, Secondary, General)

***Aaron Norikane** (he/him) has been pushing to transform our education systems (both in schools and in our communities) for young people in the Seattle area for more than 30 years. As a facilitator with the BELONG Partners team working with South King County schools and beyond, he sees how communities built around people and not profit, open a world of possibility.*

Developing a Values-Based AI Policy

AI is a game changer! The end of civilization as we know it! An industry disrupter! The end of teaching! A time saver! A savior! A teacher's aide! The end of the five-paragraph essay! A superintelligent doombringer! The end of endless grading and grunt work! The end of the world! Grift and hype abound. Increasingly, school leaders fear being left behind, and find the appeal of that glinting silver bullet too much to resist. In this workshop we will slow down, talk about some of the actual definitions/intro into basic "generative" AI concepts, and ground our thinking in our teaching values before drafting a policy/letter to students. (Secondary, Middle)

***Em Winokur** is the Library Media Specialist at Parkrose High School in Portland.*

Disability Justice in Secondary Mathematics: Integers and Spoon Theory

This workshop guides educators through a math lesson using Spoon Theory to explain energy levels in chronic illness, connecting them to integer operations. Through discussions, activities, and real-life scenarios, participants link spoons to daily tasks using positive and negative integers. Centering disability justice, the workshop fosters humanizing conversations about disability. Educators apply math standards while reflecting on fairness, equity, and lived experiences to make math more meaningful and inclusive. (Secondary, Middle, Secondary)

***Boaz Kealy** (they/he/she) is a queer, trans, and disabled doctoral student in Critical Special Education at the University of Washington studying mathematics pedagogy and content knowledge for special education teachers. They have taught middle school mathematics in both general education and self-contained classrooms in the Pacific Northwest. **Juliana Veden** is a doctoral student at the University of Washington studying asset based secondary mathematics*

for learners with disabilities. She taught 6th–11th graders mathematics in self-contained and inclusive settings in Seattle and Boston.

Educators Rising: Fostering the Next Generation of Educators

In this workshop, Portland Public Schools teachers and students will share their experiences with their Education CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs. In our courses, high school students learn more about the field while interning in early childhood education and elementary classrooms. Students participating in the program will share some of their work, including their published children's books, lessons they've facilitated and answer questions for educators interested in starting a program like this one. If a new program feels a little too lofty, educators might think about this as an opportunity to develop a partnership with another classroom.

(General, Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary)

***Blair Hennessy** teaches U.S. History: Ethnic Studies and runs the Educator Program at Lincoln High School in Portland. **Nicola Onnis** teaches English and runs the Educator Program at McDaniel High School in Portland. She recently obtained a degree in library sciences.*

Exploring Systems of Power with The Power Rainbow

Grown-ups have created complicated systems of power that can be hard to understand, and equally hard to explain and explore with kids. In this workshop we will introduce The Power Rainbow, a tool to scaffold learning about systems of power with children. We will use a hands-on activity to talk about power, learn about The Power Rainbow through a comic, and explore ways it can be used in education settings. (Elementary, Early Childhood, Middle,

Parents/Caregivers, General)

***Hania Mariën** is an educator, artist, and social science researcher, who works with children, caregivers, and educators to create more just futures. Her research uses participatory, arts-based and other qualitative methods to explore how adults can support children in exploring identity, power, and justice.*

The Heroes We Need Today: Teaching the Radical Lives of Ida B. Wells

In the years following the racial justice uprisings of 2020, schools across the country dropped racist namesakes and embraced local and national civil rights leaders as namesakes. In Portland, Woodrow Wilson High School became Ida B. Wells High School. In this mixer activity, participants learn about the radical lives of Ida B. Wells to more fully honor the depth and breadth of Wells' life and activism. (Secondary)

***Matt Reed** is a statewide union organizer with the Oregon Education Association. Before that he taught social studies in Portland, including at Ida B. Wells. **Brady Bennon** teaches at Ida B. Wells High School in Portland. He teaches U.S. History and Modern World History.*

Identity, Diversity, and Justice: Teaching Palestinian Children's Literature in Elementary Classrooms

In this interactive workshop, participants will reflect on the metaphor of windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Rudine Sims Bishop) as a metaphor for thinking about Palestinian children's literature in early elementary classrooms. We will engage directly with books and collaborate on opportunities for teaching about Palestine and how to meaningfully integrate children's books by Palestinian authors and about Palestinian lived experiences. (Early Childhood, Elementary, Parents/Caregivers)

Aysha Kloub (she/they) is a kindergarten teacher in Tacoma Public Schools and a member of the Tacoma Education Association. Alisun Thompson (she/they) is a literacy teacher educator at the University of Puget Sound and a member of Tacoma Jewish Voice for Peace.

Introduction to Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict States

In the aftermath of conflict or long periods of repression, how does a society begin to heal? How do countries move forward while acknowledging the harm that has been done? These are the central questions of Transitional Justice — a process that helps communities rebuild, restore trust, and move toward democracy and peace. In this activity, educators will be introduced to the mechanism of Transitional Justice and explore their application in three case studies.

(Secondary)

Branda Anderson is the Teaching and Learning Specialist at the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle. She was a high school history teacher for 19 years. Branda is a PhD candidate in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, with a dissertation focus on Holocaust and Genocides Education in secondary schools.

It's a Big Fat Deal: How Schools Teach Contempt for Fat People and What We Can Do About It

Fatphobia is alive and thriving in our schools, but there is a lot educators can do about it. In this interactive workshop, participants will explore their own attitudes and beliefs about weight and body size and learn concrete strategies they can use to combat fatphobia, especially with regards to how fatphobia can impact students in the education system. Participants will read, write, and share, and develop an assertive advocacy stance to take with them into their educational practice. (General, Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers)

Katy Alexander is a special education teacher in Portland. She has written several articles for Rethinking Schools magazine, including "It's a Big Fat Deal: How Schools Teach Contempt for Fat People — and What We Can Do About It."

Melanin Magic: Avenues for Introducing Social Justice into Science Teaching Through Laboratory Experiments with Drosophila

Laboratory science curriculum is not typically designed with social justice intentions in mind. This workshop introduces hands-on classroom experiments that connect melanin, climate change, and phenotypic plasticity in the fruit fly *Drosophila*, using a DIY approach imbedded in everyday life. The workshop is interwoven with opportunities to connect anti-racist content challenging scientific racism and racial stereotypes while also satisfying content requirements such as NGSS. Participants will brainstorm how this activity can be incorporated into their classrooms. (Secondary, Middle)

Lisa Weasel is a professor of Environmental Science and Management and affiliate faculty in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies in the School of Gender, Race and Nations at Portland State University where she facilitates the FLIES Project (Feminist Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Experimental Science).

Palestine and the Meaning of Home

What does home feel like, sound like, smell like? In this immersive, student-centered workshop, participants will explore the essential question: How do our five senses shape the way we

experience and understand the meaning of home? Using Palestine as a focal point, this session connects personal memory to collective identity, inviting participants to reflect on the sensory experiences that define their own understanding of place, roots, and belonging. (Secondary, Middle)

***Jesse Hendryx-Dobson** is a public school teacher and has been in education for 12 years — six at the middle school level and six at the high school level. Jesse recently obtained a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction from Portland State University. **Alicen Gaitanis** is a Social Studies teacher and 9th-grade coordinator in Portland. Alicen has taught for six years with North Clackamas School District in middle and high school.*

Poets on Fire: Making Sense of a Contaminated Future

Nuclear waste at sites like Hanford threaten our water, wildlife, and way of life. Grappling with the inheritance of nuclear waste is a particularly heavy burden for students. Poetry allows students to process the painful history of nuclear weapons production and its impacts on workers, tribes, downwinder communities, future generations, and the non-human world. Participants will use poetry to dive into these issues and leave with ideas they can bring back to their classrooms. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle)

*Since 2007, **Liz Mattson** has worked closely with educators in the Pacific Northwest to bring content about nuclear weapons and waste cleanup to the classroom. Liz is Senior Program Strategist for the Seattle-based non-profit Hanford Challenge. **Miya Burke** lives in Portland and works with educators in the Pacific Northwest to bring accessible content about nuclear weapons and waste cleanup to the classroom, with a focus on the Hanford Nuclear Site. Burke is Program Manager for the Seattle-based non-profit Hanford Challenge, is a member of the Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board, and vice-chair of the Hanford Advisory Board.*

Reading the Waves: the Historiography of Feminism

Feminist history is underrepresented in U.S. secondary schools; this leads to a host of misconceptions about this movement. In this mixer and art activity, participants learn about key aspects of feminist history and create their own visual and poetic narrative to explore shifts in thinking between each of the Four Waves of Feminism. Ultimately, this project encourages participants to think critically about the historiography of feminism. (Secondary, Middle)

***Jen Franczak** has taught K–10 in Southern Oregon for more than 20 years. Her passion is teaching how the voiceless gain voice. **Ronan Dunphy** has taught HS Literature for more than 20 years in the United States and Japan. His passion is teaching how narrative is political.*

Reclaiming Agency: Empowering Teens to Think Critically About Their Technology Choices

Are you frustrated by the lack of agency students have over their technology usage? Are you concerned about companies ushering in the death of critical thought and your students being at risk of becoming cogs in the technocratic machine? So are we. This unit is designed to get kids thinking critically and reflectively about their technology use, and to give some power over their time, mental energy, and creativity in a world constantly vying for their attention. (Secondary, Middle)

***Rachael Geyer** teaches English at Parkrose High School in Portland. She is passionate about teaching reading and writing as a community act to learn and know oneself in relation to others. With 12 years teaching experience, she has taught ESL to adults, English to students in grades*

7–9, and has mentored new teachers. **Joshua Bott** teaches 9th-grade English, AVID, and AP Literature at Parkrose High School. He has worked as a writing coach and poetry workshop instructor for more than 10 years, and advises the PHS Poetry Club.

STEM Education for Social Justice

Building on a similar presentation from previous years, we will explore what STEM education for social justice can be. I will share work that I do with my students to explore racism and implicit bias through physics as a jumping-off point for further discussion. Attendees can expect to gain clearer motivation, tools for overcoming challenges, ideas to try in their own educational settings, and a network of educators with whom to continue this work. (Secondary, Middle)

Moses Rifkin is dedicated to integrating social justice into STEM education. He teaches and coaches at University Prep, an independent school in Seattle.

Student Essays That Matter: Defying Formulaic Writing

Often, by the time students reach middle and high school, the essay is the only writing genre assigned. Yes, students should analyze text, peel back the layers, develop a thesis, marshal evidence, persuade us of their ideas. The problem is that much essay teaching lays waste to student imagination and voice. The tight reliance on a format silences students' real ideas. There is no singing, no laughing, no poetry. No one wants to write them, no one wants to read them. In this workshop, participants will explore how to teach powerful essays. (Secondary, Middle)

Linda Christensen is a former high school language arts teacher and director of the Oregon Writing Project. She is an editor for *Rethinking Schools*, and author of *Teaching for Joy and Justice: Re-Imagining the Language Arts Classroom* and *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*.

Subversives: Stories from the Red Scare

The Red Scare was a scorched-earth policy against the country's most progressive forces. In this mixer activity, participants will meet 27 different targets of state harassment and repression. Some of these individuals are communists (and Communists), some are not. Most are politically engaged in some form of organizing, but not all. They are men and women, immigrants and native-born, young and old, racially diverse, in government and outside it, affluent, middle class, and poor, Queer and straight. (Secondary, Middle)

Ursula Wolfe-Rocca is a high school social studies teacher in Portland and a member of the *Rethinking School* editorial board.

Teaching Indigenous Enslavement and Decolonizing Primary Source Research

Educators will learn about new research uncovering stories of Indigenous enslavement, gain perspective on the historical trauma affecting Indigenous students, and grapple with how to teach hard history in a culturally responsive way. The facilitators are doing primary source research, documenting untold histories, and stories of Indigenous enslavement in Alaska. The session will include hands-on participatory small group conversation and will model Indigenized teaching practices, including rethinking archives and primary sources. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle, Parents/Caregivers, General)

Miranda Petruska is *Dichinaneek' Hwt'ana* from Nikolai, Alaska. Petruska has worked in Tribal healthcare for 17 years in various capacities but primarily in the Community Health Aide program. She is an MSW student with the University of Denver, and is a member of the

*Acknowledging Real Indigenous Stories and Experiences team. **Marie Acemah** is the founder and director of See Stories, a nonprofit that builds inclusive communities with film and story. She has taught digital storytelling to high school students and facilitated culturally responsive teaching courses for educators for many years. Marie is the producer of the Learning for Justice film The Forgotten Slavery of Our Ancestors, which is part of the Teaching Hard History: American Slavery curriculum.*

Teaching Traumatic Topics with Safety in Mind: Content Disclosures, De-rolling Procedures, Intentional Material Choices, and Safe Spaces

Teaching material that could be traumatizing or re-traumatizing to students puts teachers in a difficult position. Some choose not to teach difficult material to avoid harming students, others forge ahead and hope that students will be alright dealing with hard material. This workshop focuses on specific tools that teachers have available to them to teach difficult material while keeping students' safety in mind. (Secondary)

***Liz Oppelt**, they/them, is a Theatre and World History teacher at Eagle Point High School in Eagle Point, Oregon. She holds an Artistic Mental Health Practitioner Certification through the Association of Mental Health Coordinators.*

Trans Liberation in Our Schools

This workshop will consist of a short (40-min.) panel introducing Oregon-based teachers and organizers working for protection of trans students and teachers, and presenting the rights of students in Oregon in Portland Public Schools as a working model. The second half of the workshop (40 min.) will be for breakout groups to connect by grade level if they work within schools or by community organization if they work outside of schools. Guiding questions for the breakout groups: "How do these rights/policies differ from what your students or coworkers experience? How do we close that gap?" (Secondary, Elementary, Middle, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Parents/Caregivers)

***Ty Marshall** teaches social studies at McDaniel High School and is a trans teacher and parent. He has been teaching eight years. He co-edited the Rethinking Schools book, Transgender Justice in Schools. **Kernan Willis** is an elementary school special education teacher and has taught for 13 years in Portland. He's been leading the GSA (gender and sexuality alliance) for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders for the past four years. He is queer and trans. **Mads Bourdon** is a new-to-high-school counselor at Milwaukie High School & Milwaukie Academy of the Arts. She has been counseling for five years and served as an elementary GSA advisor for four. She wrote A Kids Book About Chosen Family, and contributed to the Rethinking Schools book, Transgender Justice in Schools. **Seth Johnstone** (he/him) is the Transgender Justice Program Manager at Basic Rights Oregon. For the last decade, Seth worked in LGBTQIA2S+ advocacy with a focus on equity training facilitation, houseless youth services, transgender healthcare, and policy. He holds a role coordinating statewide transgender justice efforts — building a broad and inclusive politically powerful movement, shifting public opinion, and working to achieve policy protections.*

The Unexamined Norm: Engaging Students in Conversations About Whiteness

Whiteness often operates invisibly in schools, shaping curriculum and culture without being named. This interactive workshop supports educators in examining their own identities,

unpacking systems of dominance, and exploring resources that help students consider their identities through a positive, anti-oppressive lens. Through structured dialogue, practical tools, and collaborative curriculum analysis, participants will leave with new language, frameworks, and strategies to build more racially conscious, anti-oppressive classrooms — for all students. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle, Parents/Caregivers, General, Teacher Educators)

***Puja Clifford** is an instructor in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Oregon. She formerly taught high school ELA to multilingual newcomer students in San Francisco with Elizabeth. **Elizabeth de Rham** is an adjunct instructor in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Oregon. She formerly taught high school social studies to multilingual newcomer students in San Francisco with Puja.*

“We Make the Road by Walking”: How Teachers and Students Can Work Together to Create Popular Education Experiences in Public Education Through Critical Thinking Around Immigration, Race, and Students’ Lived Experiences

This workshop will discuss how we worked together as a Reading Intervention teacher and Language Arts teacher to foster students’ understanding of past and present migration movements and struggles. We will present how we drew on Paulo Freire’s popular education model to support students’ connections between Tacoma’s history and their own knowledge and experiences. By investigating texts from our lessons and viewing students’ projects, participants will adapt our units to incorporate their own community’s history. (Middle, Elementary, Secondary)

***Rebecca Amina Echeverria** is a Queer Muslim teacher and parent who lives and teaches on unceded Puyallup Territory. **Alyssa Urish** is a parent, organizer, and Jewish educator who teaches at First Creek Middle School in Tacoma. She teaches English Language Arts and AVID.*

When Privileged Parents Make Demands: Troubleshooting Obstacles to Socially Just Classrooms

Parents with racial and economic privilege often expect schools to prioritize their own children’s needs over those of the larger school community. Their demands threaten to divert time and resources from making school work for those kids and families furthest from educational justice. In this workshop, we consider how to disrupt privileged parents’ often individualistic and inequitable education priorities, and explore strategies for recruiting these parents to be genuine advocates for socially just classrooms. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle)

***Lisa Sibbett** is an independent educational researcher, teacher educator, and former high school teacher in Seattle. **Stephanie Forman** is a research scientist at the University of Washington. Her kids attend Seattle Public Schools.*

Who Am I? Who Are You?: Strengthening Anti-Bias Skills and Practice Through Cultural Work, Identity Expression, and Active Listening with the Threads of Justice Collective

Cultural work and organizing are central to liberatory education and anti-oppression work. It is everybody’s work. In this workshop, the invitation into creative expression are two fold: 1. Inspire the expression of your story: who you are, how you resist, how you grieve your experience of — or participation in — oppression, share your struggles, and your work in healing. 2. Build community: share energy that can shift people and recognize the potential and power of unity. (General, Early Childhood, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Parents/Caregivers)

*Melissa Van Bergen is the sponsoring organization representative and board member for the Threads of Justice Collective in Portland. She teaches preschool at Catlin Gabel School. **Grace Bounds** is the president of the board for the Threads of Justice Collective. She is a contract specialist for Preschool for All and the Preschool and Early Learning Division. **Theresa Starreveld** is a board member and program coordinator for Threads of Justice Collective.*

Lunch: 12:00 – 1:00

Session #2: 1:00 – 2:30

Choosing Curiosity: Building Inclusive Communities in an Age of Judgment

In this workshop, participants will explore how to foster inclusive communities through a lens of curiosity. We will practice approaching ourselves and others with wonder instead of judgment, setting frameworks for boundaries and norms, and work through framing questions in ways that do not perpetuate judgment or harm. This workshop will involve written reflection, partner work, and discussion-based problem solving. Participants will leave having practiced curiosity-based ways to build safe and inclusive classroom communities at the beginning of the school year.

(Secondary, Middle)

***Chloé Avila** is going into her ninth year as a secondary language arts teacher. She devotes her career to building and fostering safe places for students to be and believe in their truest selves.*

***Darshanpreet Gill** is going into her 13th year as a science teacher. She enjoys working in community with others and making science accessible. **Natalie Drummond** just “retired” from teaching after 15 years working as a secondary special education teacher and reading intervention specialist. She is committed to creating spaces and relationships that allow for people to access literacy as an act of liberation, resistance, and joy.*

Climate Justice Is Justice for All: Decolonizing Education Through Place-Based Learning and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

In response to the climate crisis, a despairing issue, educators must reimagine how we teach science (everything!). This interactive workshop demonstrates how combining Indigenous knowledge and place-based resources creates more engaging science education, making complex topics more tangible and approachable. Through a mini-field trip, student work sample analysis, and collaborative planning, participants will experience how moving learning beyond classroom walls and considering an Indigenous lens can empower students to become active leaders in their communities. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle, General)

***Natalie Reszka Zayas**, MAT, NBCT AYA Science, teaches at Lincoln High School in Tacoma. She is the founder and director of LHS Science Outdoors, Climate Change Club Advisor, AP Environmental Science, AP Biology, Biology, and Chemistry teacher.*

Connecting Stories, Building Solidarity: The Power of Narrative in Educating for Justice

Can a story from across the world transform a student's understanding of justice and liberation? In this workshop, we examine the role of narrative in illuminating experiences of state violence, displacement, and resilience. We will begin by screening *Severed*, a short film about a Palestinian teenager from Gaza, and then explore how themes across different stories can be a tool for solidarity-based learning all rooted in the idea that our struggles for liberation are interconnected. (Secondary, Middle, Parents/Caregivers, General, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers)

Sara Caplan is a curriculum designer working as a program assistant at Donkeysaddle Projects (DSP). A former middle school teacher, she specializes in creating inclusive, culturally responsive, and equity-focused learning experiences that connect students with real-world social justice issues. Jen Marlowe is a documentary filmmaker, writer, and the founder of Donkeysaddle Projects. Jen identifies first and foremost as a social justice/human rights activist and considers her filming and writing to be tools of her activism.

Critical Media Literacy and the Classroom

What stories are we told about schooling by films and other media? What is the impact of media on reality? This workshop is reflective and practical: Participants will reflect on their schooling narratives and will leave with at least one critical media literacy strategy to use in their own classroom. (Secondary, Elementary, Middle, General, Teacher Educators)

Puja Clifford is an instructor in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Oregon. She formerly taught high school ELA to multilingual newcomer students in San Francisco.

A Different Lens: Reclaiming Our Stories with Counter Narrative Photojournalism

We'll explore the work of photojournalist Anthony Vazquez, whose photojournalism strives to humanize Venezuelan migrants. Then we will explore how Oregon Public Broadcasting covers marginalized communities in Oregon. Then we will see how high school students from these marginalized communities used photojournalism to highlight the positive stories that OPB could have covered to tell a fuller story. Lastly, participants will use photojournalism to flip the script and craft counter-narratives about the communities that they care about the most. (Open to anyone who wants to focus on humanizing those who are far too often dehumanized, anyone who cares deeply about issues connected with migration.)

Charles Sanderson serves the students and families of Woodburn, Oregon. He is a Fulbright Teacher for Global Classrooms Fellow, a 1619 Education Network Fellow, a Pulitzer Center Teaching Fellow, a Vocal Justice Teaching Fellow, and has provided curriculum consultation for The Apollo in Harlem. Isabella Baldisseri is a senior at Woodburn High School. She is a widely published writer. She has conducted research at Oregon Health Sciences University on drug addiction and is an alumna of Vocal Justice, an organization dedicated to empowering young people to use their authentic voices to speak up on the issues that matter most to them.

Disability Justice and the Mathematical Practices

Access to high quality math education for students with disabilities is a social and racial justice issue. This session explores how IEPs can be tools for disability justice by helping students understand themselves as learners and break through disability-related barriers. We will discuss and practice how to use the Mathematical Practices to create IEP goals that go beyond skills &

accuracy measurements to supporting critical mathematical analysis and thinking for students. We can't wait to write disability-affirming, student-centered math goals with you! (General, Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, Parents/Caregivers, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers)

***Shraddha Shirude** is a disabled woman of color who has a great passion for justice. Because of the guidance from her ancestors, she is now a high school math teacher in Seattle Public Schools as well as the math specialist at WA Ethnic Studies Now. **Makena Gadiant** is a Visual Artist and Special Education Teacher in Seattle Public Schools. Much of her life has been guided by disability justice activism, including supporting disabled families, students, and educators.*

Educators Meeting the Moment: Opportunities for Confronting White Nationalism Within and Across Classrooms and Communities

This workshop uses the Confronting White Nationalism in Schools Toolkit to equip educators with tools to prepare for and respond to incidents of organized bigotry. Local context, political climate, and personal identity shape what resistance can look like for individual teachers. Through self-assessments and scenario planning exercises, attendees will develop realistic, community-based strategies grounded in their capacity, support systems, and the unique challenges of their schools. (General, Middle, Secondary, Parents/Caregivers)

***Jay Breslow** is the Education Program Manager at Western States Center and stewards a suite of toolkits that help school communities push back against white nationalism. He was principal of Twin Rivers Charter School, serving 8th–12th grade, for eight years, and has been in and around schools for 25+ years. **Rae Page** (any pronouns) is a Senior Toolkit Trainer with Western States Center and an elementary teacher based in Seattle. They are the lead author of Western States Center's student-facing organizing toolkit, Speaking for Ourselves: Resisting Organized Bigotry at School and co-creator of the limited series podcast Schooling Bigotry.*

Fly for Freedom: Interrogating Power, Patriotism, and Historical Erasure

Fly for Freedom shares the story of Antoinette, a young Black woman working in Seattle's WWII aeronautics industry who helps train the Tuskegee Airmen. This multimedia performance reveals the fight for democracy, abroad and at home, through the lens of the Double Victory campaign and the exclusion of Black women from military service. An interactive workshop follows, inviting participants to reflect, respond, and connect the story to present-day struggles for justice, recognition, and honest education. (Elementary, Middle, Secondary, Parents/Caregivers, General, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers)

***Ayo Tushinde** (they/she) is a Seattle-based performing artist committed to creating work rooted in intersectionality and inclusion. Their credits include Rosalind in As You Like It and Laertes in Hamlet with Seattle Shakespeare Company, along with performances at Living Voices, ACT, Intiman, Seattle Rep, and other local theaters.*

From Harm to Healing: Equipping Engagement Teams for Critical Incident Response

When harm occurs between families and schools, how we respond can either deepen mistrust — or be a turning point toward healing. This interactive session uses a real-world case scenario to help family engagement teams, leaders, and Title I directors build the readiness they need to navigate critical incidents. Walk away with a practical response tool, an example plan, and strategies you can begin applying immediately. (General, Elementary, Middle, Secondary,

Parents/Caregivers, General, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers)

*Consulting Coordinator and Senior Liberation Consultant at And Still We Rise, **Britney Boyles** is based in Washington State and was a public school educator for nearly a decade. As an administrator, Boyles centered the needs of those who are often unseen and amplified the voices of scholars — shifting the power dynamics to ensure school is a place kids want to be. As a consultant Boyles provides coaching and facilitation toward the transformational learning that needs to happen to ensure folx have the space to just be. Founder and CEO of And Still We Rise, LLC, **Natasha Holmes** is a psychologist and consultant who identifies as Black, African American, queer, cisgender woman, and a third-generation immigrant. She is a psychoanalytically and trauma-informed Black feminist and womanist psychologist with training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, and biofeedback-informed interventions. She interned at the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology at Boston University School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center and her postdoctoral training was at the Boston Institute for Psychotherapy.*

Investigating Large Data Sets with Students for Evidence of Systemic Racism

Data analysis is a natural place to investigate race and racism, due to availability of data on many issues. My colleagues and I have created modules that use the free statistical software CODAP and that deal with police traffic stops and out-of-school suspensions through large data sets. In this session we will use CODAP to investigate data, and I will share our materials. Most suitable for mathematics and statistics teachers. Personal computers are strongly recommended.

(Secondary, Middle)

***Ksenija Simic-Muller** is a mathematician and teacher educator at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. She is committed to helping create safe, just, and joyful mathematics classrooms for all students.*

Mapping Memories: A Place-Based Guided Tour Project

Gentrification continues to impact our communities, but resistance continues, too. Groups such as the Albina Music Trust preserve the history that gentrification seeks to erase, replace, and misrepresent. Working toward a voicey, research-based script, participants will explore the powerful history of local Portland landmarks, analyze model guided tours from community groups and students, choose a theme for their own tour, and practice using a historical database to follow their curiosity about places they value. (Secondary, Middle)

***Jaydra Johnson** is a language arts teacher, artist, writer, and Rethinking Schools contributor. About her award-winning debut essay collection, *Low: Notes on Art and Trash*, Rethinking Schools reviewers wrote, “In wrenchingly honest, intimate storytelling, Johnson explores the violence of how schools, the criminal justice system, and a capitalist economy turn human beings into trash. But she also celebrates how art can reveal and resist.” She works at Jefferson High School in Portland and writes for local and national outlets. **Abigail Abel** teaches English and creative writing at Jefferson High School. Now in her fourth year with Portland Public Schools, she brings energy, creativity, and commitment to equity in the classroom. With a master’s degree in teaching and English, she builds a community where imagination and student voice thrive, helping students feel confident sharing their ideas.*

Moving Toward Justice: Designing Proposals to Change the Current Criminal Justice System

In the United States, our legal code is ostensibly race- and class-blind, but there are huge racial and class disparities in the application of laws and punishments. The justice design proposal promotes activist education by empowering participants to target one specific injustice and address a specific audience, such as a policy maker or a larger audience to raise awareness, to demand change. (Secondary, Middle)

Sarah Baggs Eastwood, a native Oregonian, teaches 9th-grade Ancient Global History and 10th-grade A.P. Modern World History at Urban Assembly Maker Academy in New York City.

Queering American History: Teaching the Long History of Queer Existence in Challenging Times

In contemporary history, Queer existence is often scorned as something “new” and therefore wrong. Primary sources and historical accounts show us the Queer community has been here since humans began documenting their own existence. This workshop will invite us to reflect on how changes in language impact our perception of time and human experience, and will introduce educators to a variety of historical figures through a Queer lens to be integrated into their own curriculum. (Secondary, Middle, Parents/Caregivers, General)

Kate Merwin teaches in Tacoma on the land of the Puyallup Tribe. She teaches in an interdisciplinary environment with a focus on U.S. History, Ethnic Studies, Contemporary World Problems, and English Language Arts. She brings experience working in “non-traditional” classrooms, from prisons to a design and engineering school.

Sharing Our Journeys (Redux): Black and Brown Educators Building Solidarity Through Testimonios

Twenty percent of teachers in the U.S. K–12 system are teachers of color and Black teachers. Research suggests that they have a higher percentage of turnover than their White colleagues. A tradition at the Northwest Teaching for Social Justice Conferences in Seattle and Portland prior to the COVID pandemic, this workshop seeks to create a sustainable dialogue among Black and Brown educators working within the public K–12 system. It is an opportunity to talk about shared experiences, successes, and struggles through this work within the framework of the Testimonio. A goal for this workshop is to provide a healing and decolonized space where participants can voice candidly their thoughts on sustaining and growing the diversity within education and supporting each other across the region. Although all are welcome to travel alongside with those sharing their experiences, Black and Brown voices will be centered.

Luis Gabriel Escamilla (he/him) is an Assistant Principal for the Kent School District in Washington. He has spent time over the past 10+ years attempting to humanize the roles he has played: classroom teacher, instructional coach, ELD Specialist, and building administrator. A Longoria (they/them) is Associate Professor and Chair of Secondary Education in the Woodring College of Education in Western Washington University, Bellingham.

The Subtext Speaks: Poetic Interventions in Language Policy

In this hands-on workshop, educators will analyze two very different language policies — Trump’s recent executive order declaring English the official language of the United States and Oregon’s Access to Linguistic Inclusion policy — through the creation of erasure poems. Participants will reflect on emotional and political impacts using guiding questions, then share

and discuss their artistic responses in small groups. This session offers a creative, justice-centered approach to exploring power, language, and belonging in educational spaces. (General, Secondary ESA (counselor, SLP, PT/OT, social worker, audiologist, etc.)

Jaclyn Blum Bovee is a former high school English Language Development teacher and current Ph.D. candidate in Language, Equity, and Educational Policy at Oregon State University. Her research and activism focus on how language education policies impact multilingual and immigrant youth and how marginalized communities can act as policymakers themselves. **Elena Valdés Chavarría** is a doctoral student in the Language, Equity, and Educational Policy program at Oregon State University. She grew up in Sonora by the Sea of Cortés in México, and has devoted herself to promoting the value of traditional knowledge from communities working toward gradual social reform. Her current research interests lie at the intersection of transnational communities and critical pedagogy, with a focus on culturally sustaining practices.

Teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander Stories with *Foundations and Futures*: a Free, New and Comprehensive Digital Website from the UCLA Asian American Studies Center

This workshop will present *Foundations and Futures*: a comprehensive new, free digital textbook from the UCLA Asian American Studies Center for high school and early college students. *Foundations and Futures* meets the Ethnic Studies requirements and features diverse histories of untold Asian American and Pacific Islander stories. Fifty chapters of standards-aligned curriculum at an 8–12th-grade reading level with lesson plans will be available in early 2026. (Secondary, General)

Arlene Inouye was the United Teachers Los Angeles Treasurer and Secretary from 2012–2023 and was the Co Chair for the UTLA Bargaining Team in 2019 and 2023 that transformed the union and included Ethnic Studies in the contract. She is the Foundations and Futures Outreach Co-coordinator at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. **Linn Lee** has been a history teacher for 20 years and a curriculum specialist for 10 years. She recently retired from the Santa Ana School District and was an original member of the Model Curriculum Committee for Ethnic Studies for the California Department of Education.

Teaching the Seeds of Violence in Palestine-Israel

There is a throughline from the dispossession of Palestinian peasants in the late Ottoman Empire and early British Mandate to today's violence in Gaza and the West Bank. Participants will engage in this classroom-tested mystery/mixer activity to explore the roots of today's violence in Palestine-Israel. We meet early Zionists, Ottoman officials, Palestinian peasants and journalists, British leaders, a member of the Jewish Bund, and President Woodrow Wilson to search for the "seeds" of today's violence. (Secondary, Middle, Parents/Caregivers, General)

Bill Bigelow is the curriculum editor of *Rethinking Schools* magazine, co-director of the Zinn Education Project, and co-editor of *Teaching Palestine: Lessons, Stories, Voices*.

Teaching the Third Red Scare (While It's Happening)

There's a third Red Scare underway. Once again, teachers and students are key targets of repression and potential agents of resistance. This workshop updates the Zinn Education Project activity "Subversives: Stories from the Red Scare" by mapping our present struggle into a century-long conflict of social change. Teachers and students deepen their historical knowledge, learn strategies of resistance, and practice becoming more than mere consumers of historical

knowledge, but rather agents of historical change. (General, Educators-in-training, college students, secondary and middle school students)

Dustin Ellis teaches American politics at Eastern Oregon University. He is the director of the American Democracy Project at EOU. Paul Nauert teaches American history and environmental justice issues at Eastern Oregon University.

Understanding and Responding to the New Nuclear Weapons Crises

All nine of the “nuclear nations” have recently been involved in military action or are busily preparing for future wars. Sadly, few people have a realistic idea of what nuclear weapons can do. Workshop participants will use a drawing and captioning exercise to reveal to ourselves (and discuss with each other) how we think about nuclear weapons. This introduces a history of the partial successes of “anti-bomb” activists and an exploration of possibilities for peace activism. One goal is for workshop participants to experience this drawing and captioning method first-hand, so they can see how it works and adapt the same approach for a variety of classroom themes. (Secondary, Middle, General)

Leonard Rifas republished Keiji Nakazawa’s autobiographical manga about the Hiroshima bombing in 1980–1982. He wrote and was one of the contributing artists for the comic book Ground Zero Comics: Move Beyond Nuclear Weapons, which he co-published last year with Fantagraphics and the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

Understanding the World and Each Other with The Immigrant Story & I Lived to Tell the World

This workshop will introduce participants to two fantastic Oregon-based resources for studying human migration and storytelling through individual stories; The Immigrant Story and I Lived to Tell the World: Stories from Survivors of Holocaust, Genocide, and the Atrocities of War. Participants will reflect on their own migration experiences and will leave with a handful of lesson and unit ideas for using these resources in the classroom. (Secondary, Middle)

Paige Hazard teaches Modern World History and IB Anthropology at Cleveland High School in Portland. Sankar Raman founded The Immigrant Story in 2017. He immigrated to the Pacific Northwest from India decades ago and raised his family in Beaverton. His non-profit work with The Immigrant Story blends storytelling with advocacy and community building. Elizabeth Mehren’s career as a journalist with the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times took her all over. She taught at Boston University for more than a decade. She is now based in Portland. Her book, I Lived To Tell the World (University of Oregon Press, 2024), profiles Oregonians who immigrated from around the world to escape violence and rebuild their lives.

Where Is Palestine in Children’s Literature? Strategies for Educators

There is an erasure of the narratives of Palestinians that starts very early in children’s literature and is reflected in the almost total absence of Palestine in school curricula. Teachers and librarians who explore the topic and the realities of settler colonialism and militarism are often met with threats and false accusations of antisemitism. This workshop will explore strategies and resources as part of an antiracist, anticolonial approach to history, including a useful online toolkit. (Secondary, General, Parents/Caregivers)

Alice Rothchild is a retired ob-gyn, author, and filmmaker with a 26-year history working and reporting from Israel/Palestine, last in the region in 2023. She has written three books for adults on health and human rights issues, and published a middle-grade novel and a young adult novel

in 2023, both focused on Palestine (www.alicerothchildbooks.com). **Laila Taji** is the creator of the website *ArabishWay*, where she presents accessible ways to incorporate Arabic language and culture into your home or classroom. She studied education and specialized in pediatric nursing before getting her masters in public health. She sees strong communities and safe spaces to form one's own identity as key components of a healthy childhood. **Linda Bevis** has been a Social Studies teacher and developed the *Palestine Teaching Trunk*. She has lived and worked in Palestine.

Whose Home? A City Council Role Play

Wide scale shelters? Community model villages? Affordable housing prevention? Criminalization? What and who should be prioritized as our city grapples with housing and homelessness? Our students engage with these topics while learning about (and from) real life organizations doing the work of envisioning a different housing system for their city. Participants will use the interactive structures of a role play and mock city council meeting to engage youth in developing inferences, determining and evaluating claims, and supporting claims with evidence. (Secondary)

Julia Kirkpatrick (she/her) is a 10th-year Language Arts teacher, teaching at Grant High School in her hometown of Portland.

Why Are Schools, Parks, and Libraries Free? Elementary Learners Critically Analyzing Capitalism

Participants will view examples of 2nd-grade lessons and student work in which primary-grade students are guided in critically analyzing the basis of capitalism using visuals, storytelling, manipulatives and role playing, and hands on activities — connected to the history of the Portland Black Panther Party and today's local mutual aid organizations. Participants will have access to more example lessons to view asynchronously, and have time to discuss with grade-level colleagues how to use similar strategies to make abstract concepts concrete for their learners. (Elementary, Early Childhood, Middle, Secondary)

Rina Miyamoto-Sundahl is a 2nd-grade Dual Language teacher in Oregon who strongly believes that young students are capable of understanding the very real issues that are shaping their lives and futures.

How to Access Sessions

Workshop sign-ups will open on Sched (nwtjsj2025.sched.com) on Thursday, October 16th, at 7 pm Pacific.

Keynotes

The opening and closing keynotes will both be held in the gymnasium.

Workshops

To sign up for a workshop, add the session to your personal agenda on Sched (nwtjsj2025.sched.com) by putting a check mark in the box to the left of the session title.

You will be able to sign up for one workshop per session. If you are unable to attend a workshop you signed up for, please unenroll by unchecking the session in your agenda.

Workshop locations and a map of the building can be found on Sched (nwtjsj2025.sched.com).

ASL interpretation will be available during the keynotes. Please contact rfp@nwtjsj.org if you would like to request ASL interpretation for a workshop or have another accommodation request.

Session Feedback

We value your feedback. Please take a moment to complete the session evaluation form for each session you attend. The link to the “Feedback Survey” form is available in a session’s description in Sched (nwtjsj2025.sched.com).

Conference Ground Rules

- Please turn off or silence cell phones.
- Respect others.
- Be open to learning.
- Challenge people respectfully.
- Be aware of the impact of your words and acknowledge/take responsibility when they hurt other people (even when that wasn’t your intent).
- Be aware of power and voice in the room.
- Share airspace. Be mindful of how often you speak.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Do not take photos or video recordings of the keynote or any workshops.