



LET THE LITTLE LIGHT SHINE

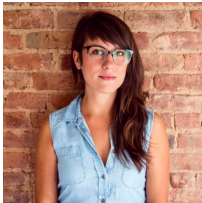
DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Courtney B. Cook, PhD, Education Manager at POV, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Let the Little Light Shine*.

National Teachers Academy (NTA) is considered a beacon for Black children: a top-ranked, high-performing elementary school located in the fastest growing neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. As the neighborhood gentrifies, a wealthy parents' group seeks to close NTA and replace it with a high school campus. How will NTA's students, parents, and educators fight to save their beloved institution?

Contributors



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ADULT NON-FICTION

Ashby, Steven K. and Bruno, Robert. *A Fight for the Soul of Public Education: The Story of the Chicago Teachers Strike*. Cornell University Press, 2016.

In reaction to the changes imposed on public schools across the country in the name of "education reform," the Chicago Teachers Union redefined its traditional role and waged a multidimensional fight that produced a community-wide school strike and transformed the scope of collective bargaining into arenas that few labor relations experts thought possible. Using interviews, first-person accounts, participant observation, union documents, and media reports, Steven K. Ashby and Robert Bruno tell the story of the 2012 strike that shut down the Chicago school system for seven days. *A Fight for the Soul of Public Education* takes into account two overlapping, parallel, and equally important stories. One is a grassroots story of worker activism told from the perspective of rank-and-file union members and their community supporters. Ashby and Bruno provide a detailed account of how the strike became an international cause when other teachers unions had largely surrendered to corporate-driven education reform. The second story describes the role of state and national politics in imposing educational governance changes on public schools and draconian limitations on union bargaining rights. It includes a detailed account of the actual bargaining process revealing the mundane and the transcendental strategies of both school board and union representatives.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

In the third edition of his highly acclaimed book, Bonilla-Silva continues to challenge color-blind thinking. He has now extended this challenge with a new chapter on Obama's election addressing the apparent miracle of a black man elected as the 44th President of the nation despite the fact that racial progress has stagnated since the 1980s and, in some areas, even regressed. In contrast to those who believe the election of President Obama is a watershed moment that signifies the beginning of a post-racial era in America, he suggests this development embodies the racial trends of the last 40 years including two he has addressed in this book: the rise of color-blind racism as the dominant racial ideology and the emergence of an apparently more flexible racial stratification system he characterizes as Latin America-like.

Burns Stillman, Jennifer. *Gentrification and Schools: The Process of Integration When Whites Reverse Flight*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

This book examines the school choice process of Gentry Parents - -white, middle and upper-middle class, highly-educated parents living in gentrifying neighborhoods - - to determine how, through the compounding effect of their many individual choices, a segregated urban school in a gentrifying neighborhood is able to transform into an integrated school, a process the author calls 'tipping in.' This study uses data from 52 formal interviews of Gentry Parents in three different

gentrifying/gentrified neighborhoods in New York City, and data from dozens of informal interviews and observations of Gentry Parents on playgrounds, school tours, and in preschool cubby rooms.

Cookson Jr, Peter. *Class rules: Exposing Inequality in American High Schools*. Teacher College Press, 2013.

Class Rules challenges the popular myth that high schools are the “great equalizers.” In his groundbreaking study, Cookson demonstrates that adolescents undergo different class rites of passage depending on the social-class composition of the high school they attend. Drawing on stories of schools and individual students, the author shows that where a student goes to high school is a major influence on his or her social-class trajectory. *Class Rules* is a penetrating, original examination of the role education plays in blocking upward mobility for many children. It offers a compelling vision of an equitable system of schools based on the full democratic rights of students.

Ewing, Eve. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism & School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

“Failing schools. Underprivileged schools. Just plain bad schools.” That’s how Eve L. Ewing opens *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*: describing Chicago Public Schools from the outside. The way politicians and pundits and parents of kids who attend other schools talk about them, with a mix of pity and contempt.

But Ewing knows Chicago Public Schools from the inside: as a student, then a teacher, and now a scholar who studies them. And that perspective has shown her that public schools are not buildings full of failures—they’re an integral part of their neighborhoods, at the heart of their communities, storehouses of history and memory that bring people together.

Never was that role more apparent than in 2013 when Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced an unprecedented wave of school closings. Pitched simultaneously as a solution to a budget problem, a response to declining enrollments, and a chance to purge bad schools that were dragging down the whole system, the plan was met with a roar of protest from parents, students, and teachers. But if these schools were so bad, why did people care so much about keeping them open, to the point that some would even go on a hunger strike?

Ewing’s answer begins with a story of systemic racism, inequality, bad faith, and distrust that stretches deep into Chicago history. Rooting her exploration in the historic African American neighborhood of Bronzeville, Ewing reveals that this issue is about much more than just schools. Black communities see the closing of their schools—schools that are certainly less than perfect but that are theirs—as one more in a long line of racist policies. The fight to keep them open is yet another front in the ongoing struggle of black people in America to build successful lives and achieve true self-determination.

Fabricant, Michael & Fine, Michelle. *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Education: What’s at Stake?* Teachers College Press, 2012.

This book will reset the discourse on charter schooling by systematically exploring the gap between the promise and the performance of charter schools. The authors do not defend the public school system, which for decades has failed primarily poor children of color. Instead, they use empirical

evidence to determine whether charter schooling offers an authentic alternative for these children. In concise chapters, they address a series of important questions related to the recent ascent of charter schools and the radical restructuring of public education. This essential introduction includes a detailed history of the charter movement, an analysis of the politics and economics driving the movement, documentation of actual student outcomes, and alternative images of transforming public education to serve all children.

Gorlewski, Julie & Tuck, Eve. *Who Decides Who Becomes a Teacher? Schools of Education as Sites of Resistance*. Taylor & Francis, 2019.

Who Decides Who Becomes a Teacher? extends the discussions and critiques of neoliberalism in education by examining the potential for Schools of Teacher Education to contest policies that are typical in K-12 schooling. Drawing on a case study of faculty collaboration, this edited volume reimagines teacher preparation programs as crucial sites of resistance to, and refusal of, unsound education practices and legislation. This volume also reveals by example how education faculty can engage in collaborative scholarly work to investigate the anticipated and unanticipated effects of policy initiatives on teaching and learning.

Love, Bettina. *We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Beacon Press, 2020.

Drawing on her life's work of teaching and researching in urban schools, Bettina Love persuasively argues that educators must teach students about racial violence, oppression, and how to make sustainable change in their communities through radical civic initiatives and movements. She argues that the US educational system is maintained by and profits from the suffering of children of color. Instead of trying to repair a flawed system, educational reformers offer survival tactics in the forms of test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education, which Love calls the educational survival complex.

To dismantle the educational survival complex and to achieve educational freedom—not merely reform—teachers, parents, and community leaders must approach education with the imagination, determination, boldness, and urgency of an abolitionist. Following in the tradition of activists like Ella Baker, Bayard Rustin, and Fannie Lou Hamer, *We Want to Do More Than Survive* introduces an alternative to traditional modes of educational reform and expands our ideas of civic engagement and intersectional justice.

Picower, Bree. *Reading, Writing, and Racism: Disrupting Whiteness in Teacher Education and in the Classroom*. Beacon Press, 2021.

When racist curriculum “goes viral” on social media, it is typically dismissed as an isolated incident from a “bad” teacher. Educator Bree Picower, however, holds that racist curriculum isn't an anomaly. It's a systemic problem that reflects how Whiteness is embedded and reproduced in education. In *Reading, Writing, and Racism*, Picower argues that White teachers must reframe their understanding about race in order to advance racial justice and that this must begin in teacher education programs. Drawing on her experience teaching and developing a program that prepares teachers to focus on social justice and antiracism, Picower demonstrates how teachers' ideology of race, consciously or

unconsciously, shapes how they teach race in the classroom. She also examines current examples of racist curricula that have gone viral to demonstrate how Whiteness is entrenched in schools and how this reinforces racial hierarchies in the younger generation.

With a focus on institutional strategies, Picower shows how racial justice can be built into programs across the teacher education pipeline—from admission to induction. By examining the who, what, why, and how of racial justice teacher education, she provides radical possibilities for transforming how teachers think about, and teach about, race in their classrooms.

Spring, Joel. *American Education: Sociocultural, Political, and Historical Studies in Education*. Routledge, 2019.

American Education introduces readers to the historical, political, social, and legal foundations of education and to the profession of teaching in the United States. In his signature straightforward and concise approach to describing complex issues, Spring illuminates events and topics that are often overlooked or whitewashed, giving students the opportunity to engage in critical thinking about education. In this edition he looks closely at the global context of education in the U.S. Featuring current information and challenging perspectives?With scholarship that is often cited as a primary source, students will come away from this clear, authoritative text informed on the latest topics, issues, and data and with a strong knowledge of the forces shaping the American educational system.

Uetricht, Micah. *Strike for America: Chicago Teachers Unions Against Austerity*. Verso, 2014.

The Chicago Teachers Union strike was the most important domestic labor struggle so far this century—and perhaps for the last forty years—and the strongest challenge to the conservative agenda for restructuring education, which advocates for more charter schools and tying teacher salaries to standardized testing, among other changes. In 2012, Chicago teachers built a grassroots movement through education and engagement of an entire union membership, taking militant action in the face of enormous structural barriers and a hostile Democratic Party leadership. The teachers won massive concessions from the city and have become a new model for school reform led by teachers themselves, rather than by billionaires. Strike for America is the story of this movement, and how it has become the defining struggle for the labor movement today.

Weiner, Lois. *The Future of Our Schools: Teachers Unions and Social Justice*. 2012.

Lois Weiner explains why teachers who care passionately about teaching and social justice need to unite the energy for teaching to efforts to self-govern and transform teacher unions. Drawing on research, her experience as a public school teacher, and as a union activist, she explains how to create the teachers unions public education desperately needs.

ADULT FICTION

Claytan Daniels, Ezra & Passmore, Ben. *BTTM FDRS*. Fantagraphics, 2019.

Young urbanites, aspiring fashion designer named Darla and her image-obsessed friend, Cynthia, move into a poor neighborhood for the cheap rent. They soon discover something far more seductive and sinister lurking behind the walls of their new home. What they don't bargain for are body parts spilling over toilet owl rims and face-eating tentacles crawling out of ventilation systems. This Afrofuturistic graphic novel gruesomely satirizes gentrification in Chicago and blends discussions around race relations, cultural appropriation and urban injustice.

Cole, Alyssa. *When No One is Watching*. Harper Collins, 2020.

Sydney Green is Brooklyn born and raised, but her beloved neighborhood seems to change every time she blinks. Condos are sprouting like weeds, FOR SALE signs are popping up overnight, and the neighbors she's known all her life are disappearing. To hold onto her community's past and present, Sydney channels her frustration into a walking tour and finds an unlikely and unwanted assistant in one of the new arrivals to the block—her neighbor Theo. But Sydney and Theo's deep dive into history quickly becomes a dizzying descent into paranoia and fear. Their neighbors may not have moved to the suburbs after all, and the push to *revitalize* the community may be more deadly than advertised.

When does coincidence become conspiracy? Where do people go when gentrification pushes them out? Can Sydney and Theo trust each other—or themselves—long enough to find out before they too disappear?

Coster, Naimi. *Halsey Street*. Center Point, 2018.

Gentrification is a metaphor for a family in crisis. Penelope Grand, an artist living in Pittsburgh, is called home to care for her ailing father, Ralph. She discovers that her Brooklyn neighborhood is not the same. In fact, it's been completely transformed. Gentrification has cost Ralph everything—his record store, his passion, and his marriage. How do you repair relationships that are in so much disarray? And will “helping” actually fray things more?

Flournoy, Angela. *The Turner House*. Mariner Books, 2016.

A story about the Black American diaspora, segregation and gentrification. The Turners have lived on Yarrow Street for over fifty years. Their house, which is apparently haunted, has seen children come and go and the arrival of grandchildren. The house still stands despite abandoned lots, an embattled city, and suburban flight. The Turner children must decide what to do with a house worth just a tenth of its mortgage.

Jenkins, Morgan. *Caul Baby*. Harper Collins, 2021.

Laila desperately wants to become a mother, but each of her previous pregnancies has ended in heartbreak. This time has to be different, so she turns to the Melancons, an old and powerful Harlem family known for their caul, a precious layer of skin that is the secret source of their healing power.

When a deal for Laila to acquire a piece of caul falls through, she is heartbroken, but when the child is stillborn, she is overcome with grief and rage. What she doesn't know is that a baby will soon be delivered in her family—by her niece, Amara, an ambitious college student—and delivered to the Melancons to raise as one of their own. Hallow is special: she's born with a caul, and their matriarch, Maman, predicts the girl will restore the family's prosperity.

Growing up, Hallow feels that something in her life is not right. Did Josephine, the woman she calls mother, really bring her into the world? Why does her cousin Helena get to go to school and roam the streets of New York freely while she's confined to the family's decrepit brownstone?

As the Melancons' thirst to maintain their status grows, Amara, now a successful lawyer running for district attorney, looks for a way to avenge her long standing grudge against the family. When mother and daughter cross paths, Hallow will be forced to decide where she truly belongs.

Woodson, Jacquelin. *Red at the Bone*. Riverhead Books, 2020.

Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's taut and powerful new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child.

As the book opens in 2001, it is the evening of sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony in her grandparents' Brooklyn brownstone. Watched lovingly by her relatives and friends, making her entrance to the music of Prince, she wears a special custom-made dress. But the event is not without poignancy. Sixteen years earlier, that very dress was measured and sewn for a different wearer: Melody's mother, for her own ceremony— a celebration that ultimately never took place.

Unfurling the history of Melody's family – reaching back to the Tulsa race massacre in 1921 – to show how they all arrived at this moment, Woodson considers not just their ambitions and successes but also the costs, the tolls they've paid for striving to overcome expectations and escape the pull of history. As it explores sexual desire and identity, ambition, gentrification, education, class and status, and the life-altering facts of parenthood, *Red at the Bone* most strikingly looks at the ways in which young people must so often make long-lasting decisions about their lives—even before they have begun to figure out who they are and what they want to be.

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Beals, Melba Pattillo. *Warriors Don't Cry: The Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2007.

In 1957, well before Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Melba Pattillo Beals and eight other teenagers became iconic symbols for the Civil Rights Movement and the dismantling of Jim Crow in the American South as they integrated Little Rock's Central High School in the wake of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Throughout her harrowing ordeal, Melba was taunted by her schoolmates and their parents, threatened by a lynch mob's rope, attacked with lighted sticks of dynamite, and injured by acid sprayed in her eyes. But through it all, she acted with dignity and courage, and refused to back down.

Warriors Don't Cry is, at times, a difficult but necessary reminder of the valuable lessons we can learn from our nation's past. It is a story of courage and the bravery of a handful of young, black students who used their voices to influence change during a turbulent time.

Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Crown, 2016.

In *Evicted*, Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of twenty-first-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.

Murch, Donna. *Assata Taught Me: State Violence, Racial Capitalism, and the Movement for Black Lives*. Haymarket Books, 2022.

Black Panther and Cuban exile Assata Shakur has inspired generations of radical protest, including the contemporary movement for Black lives. Drawing its title from one of America's foremost revolutionaries, this collection of thought-provoking essays by award-winning Panther scholar Donna Murch explores how social protest is challenging our current system of state violence and mass incarceration. Murch exposes the devastating consequences of overlapping punishment campaigns against gangs, drugs, and crime on poor and working-class populations of color. Through largely hidden channels, these punishment campaigns generate enormous revenues for the state. Under such conditions, organized resistance to the advancing tide of state violence and mass incarceration has proven difficult.

This timely and urgent book shows how a youth-led political movement has emerged in recent years to challenge the bipartisan consensus on punishment and looks to the future through a redistributive, queer, and feminist lens. Murch frames the contemporary movement in relation to earlier struggles for Black Liberation, while excavating the origins of mass incarceration and the political economy that drives it.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Jemisin, N.K. *The City We Became*. Orbit, 2020.

Every great city has a soul. Some are as ancient as myths, and others are as new and destructive as children. New York City? She's got six. But every city also has a dark side. A roiling, ancient evil stirs in the halls of power, threatening to destroy the city and her six newborn avatars unless they can come together and stop it once and for all.

Older, Daniel José. *Shadowshaper*. Scholastic, 2016.

This book begins with Sierra painting a mural on the side of a hated five-story building that developers have abandoned in the middle of her Brooklyn neighborhood. At first, Sierra thinks painting the mural is her way of fighting back, but the murals have a deeper role in the story. Sierra discovers that she comes from a long line of shadow shapers. This means she has the power to inject spirits into her paintings. She'll use this power to try and preserve her neighborhood from both magical and non-magical attacks. The effects of gentrification are present throughout the story. They chip away at her sense of belonging but also threaten her life.

Rivera, Lilliam. *The Education of Margot Sanchez*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017.

When sixteen-year-old Margot Sanchez steals her dad's credit cards to buy the clothes she needs to fit in with her new prep school friends, her parents decide she needs to return to her roots. Her punishment is working in her dad's South Bronx grocery store. At first, her number one goal is getting her summer plans back on track to join her new friends in the Hamptons. But through a charming community organizer named Moises and her own observations on changes in the neighborhood she begins to care about preserving the community she originally felt so eager to distance herself from.

Watson, Renée. *This Side of Home*. Bloomsbury USA, 2015.

This story shows twin sisters, Nikki and Maya, having completely opposite reactions to the gentrification of their Portland neighborhood. Nikki is excited about the new restaurants, boutiques, and coffee shops. But Maya worries about her friends being forced to move because of rising rents and the future of the black business owners in their community. Told through poetic, lyrical language this book offers a multi-faceted look at the conflicts that arise in a changing neighborhood.

Zoboi, Ibi. *Pride*. Balser & Bray, 2018.

Zuri Benitez has pride. Brooklyn pride, family pride, and pride in her Afro-Latino roots. But pride might not be enough to save her rapidly gentrifying neighborhood from becoming unrecognizable. When the wealthy Darcy family moves in across the street, Zuri wants nothing to do with their two teenage sons, even as her older sister, Janae, starts to fall for the charming Ainsley. She especially can't stand the judgmental and arrogant Darius. Yet as Zuri and Darius are forced to find common ground, their initial dislike shifts into an unexpected understanding. But with four wild sisters pulling her in different

directions, cute boy Warren vying for her attention, and college applications hovering on the horizon, Zuri fights to find her place in Bushwick's changing landscape, or lose it all. In a timely update of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, critically acclaimed author Ibi Zoboi skillfully balances cultural identity, class, and gentrification against the heady magic of first love in her vibrant reimagining of this beloved classic.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

Hernández-Linares, Leticia. *Alejandria Fights Back! / La Lucha de Alejandría!* Feminist Press, 2021.

For nine-year-old Alejandria, home isn't just the apartment she shares with Mami and her abuela, Tita, but rather the whole neighborhood. Home is the bakery where Ms. Beatrice makes yummy picos; the sidewalk where Ms. Alicia sells flowers with her little dog, Duende; and the corner store with friendly Mr. Amir.

But lately the city has been changing, and rent prices are going up. Many people in el barrio are leaving because they can no longer afford their homes, and For Sale signs are popping up everywhere. Then the worst thing happens: Mami receives a letter saying they'll have to move out too.

Alejandria knows it isn't fair, but she's not about to give up and leave. Join Alejandria as she brings her community together to fight and save their neighborhood!

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down.* Little-Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010.

This picture book tells the story of the momentous Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in, when four college students staged a peaceful protest that became one of the defining moments in the struggle for racial equality and the growing Civil Rights Movement.

On Feb. 1, 1960, four African American North Carolina A&T State University students, Ezell Blair Jr. (Jibreel Khazan), David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil, began a sit-in protest at a Woolworth's "whites-only" lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., where they'd been refused service. Their protest, while not the first sit-in of the modern Civil Rights Movement, triggered a wave of direct action through sit-ins across the United States.

Zamora, Beatrice. *The Spirit of Chicano Park / El espíritu del parque Chicano.* Tolteca Press, 2020.

Join Bettie and Bonky as they discover a magical park located in the most peculiar place, under a bridge! They learn to love their new home in Barrio Logan, a neighborhood with a rich history in San Diego, California. Through the eyes of a mystical señora they travel through a historical journey of a community's struggle to build a park.

The Spirit of Chicano Park/El espíritu del parque Chicano is a bilingual children's picture book that depicts the history of the creation of a historic park located in the community of Logan Heights in San Diego, California. The park was founded in 1970 as a result of a community Take Over of the land. The park was born out of a community's struggle to create a place for family gatherings amidst the destruction of their community through the enforcement of eminent domain and the building of Interstate 5 freeway and the Coronado Bridge. The park is located underneath the Coronado Bridge. Massive cement pillars support the bridge and fill the park's landscape. Community artists painted murals on the pillars that depict the history of the park and the history of the Chicano community. Housed in the center of the park, is a one-of-a-kind stage, called a Kiosco. The park is a living legacy of the people of Logan Heights, now also known as Barrio Logan. It is a vibrant park with community activities, dance ceremonials, and political gatherings occurring on a regular basis.