

# Iowa Youth Academy Challenges Restrictions on Teaching Race in Education

*Iowa Youth Program Challenges State Critical Race Theory Restrictions*

IOWA CITY , IOWA, USA, May 31, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Educators, community members and students from across the state are invited to celebrate the need to “teach truth” about United States history on Monday, June 6, 2022 at The Englert Theatre.

The action comes as lawmakers across 42 states seek to ban school curricula that include information about the role of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other oppression in U.S. history which includes Iowa’s House File 802.

Community members in Iowa are invited to celebrate how Black History and Ethnic Studies are taught in the face of state legislation.

“

I can have a sense of community and education at the same time because I think in the system that we are raised in our education is separated from our history and culture and here it is all in one.”

*Anyiel, Youth Participant in Iowa's Ethnic Studies Leadership Academy*

Monique Cottman, a veteran elementary teacher with the Iowa City Community School District said, “This initiative is important because Black people [in Iowa] are still marginalized. We need a space that elevates us out of the margins and celebrates not only our humanity but our magic. This Ethnic Studies Leadership Academy does just that.”

This #TeachTruth event will be in Johnson County as a historic site as it was named after Dr. Lulu Johnson, the first woman in the state to earn a PhD. Join us as we honor Dr. Johnson and the Black youth graduating from the Ethnic Studies Leadership Academy!



The poster features a blue background with silhouettes of hands reaching up and graduation caps falling. Text on the poster includes: @blmatschooliowa, #TEACHTRUTH, ETHNIC STUDIES LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GRADUATION, TEACHING TRUTH, WITH DR. DENISHA JONES! CO-EDITOR OF BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL : AN UPRISING FOR EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE, JUNE 6, 2022 @5:30p CST Englert Theatre, Iowa City, GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!, THE ENGLERT THEATRE, and https://bit.ly/ESLAGraduation. Below the poster, it says 'Event & Fundraiser for youth program'.

The Ethnic Studies Leadership Academy (ESLA) is founded and facilitated [Black Lives Matter](#) at School-Iowa. ESLA was developed after students protested to have Ethnic Studies as a required course in the Iowa City Community School District in 2015 and prior. ESLA is a communal response to that demand. It is a space for Black youth to learn about Black History and Ethnic Studies which includes many of the topics banned in the state legislation. ESLA is hosting a public graduation ceremony to celebrate students who have participated in a 13 week long program.



Logo of BLM at School Iowa

One of the ESLA scholars, Anyiel, a high school senior said, “This program feels like I can have a sense of community and education at the same time because I think in the system that we are raised in our education is separated from our history and culture and here it is all in one.”

Iowa is not unique in HF 802. Similar measures have been introduced in Missouri, Texas, Idaho, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Arizona, North Carolina, and more states. Many have targeted such curricula offered by the New York Times 1619 Project, Southern Poverty Law Center, Black Lives Matter at School and the Zinn Education Project.

Dr. Denisha Jones, J.D. be the keynote speaker. She will discuss the power of teaching the truth in Johnson County and beyond. Her first co-edited book, *Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Educational Justice*, was published in December 2020 by Haymarket Books.

The national event is hosted locally by Black Lives Matter at School-Iowa with fiscal sponsor Sankofa Outreach Connection. Funding provided by Iowa City Human Rights Commission.

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