

# BINGHAMTON AREA READING COUNCIL FALL EVENT 2023

BARC'S THEME FOR 2023-2024: *Supporting Our Community!*

*Each event will feature a local non-profit organization that is contributing to the health and well-being of our community and its members!*

**BARC is a NYSED CTLE Provider**

## When Binghamton Burned Its Books: The Past and Present of Today's School Wars

Presentation By Historian and  
Professor of Education & History at Binghamton University  
**ADAM LAATS, PhD**



Adam Laats is a Professor of Education and History at Binghamton University (SUNY). He was a middle-school and high-school teacher for ten years in Milwaukee while earning his PhD in US History at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. He is the author of several books, including *The Other School Reformers: Conservative Activism in American Education* (Harvard University Press, 2015) and *Fundamentalist U: Keeping the Faith in American Higher Education* (Oxford University Press, 2018). He contributes essays about the history of school culture wars to *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the *Washington Post*.

**Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 4:15 - 6:30 PM**

**Endwell Greens**

**3675 Sally Piper Road, Endwell, NY 13760**

**Cost: \$18.00/Members, Students, and Retirees \$23.00/Non-members**



- ❖ **Registration Required**
- ❖ **Click [HERE](#) for Event Registration**
- ❖ **Registration Deadline-November 4**
- ❖ **Lite Fare: Sandwich Buffet, Salads, Desserts**
- ❖ **Cash Bar**
- ❖ **Raffles and Door Prizes!**

Even the most experienced teachers and administrators have been surprised by the high heat of today's school politics. School-board meetings have been disrupted; books have been banned; teachers have been accused of "grooming"...the angry battles over the content of classrooms can make it difficult for schools to get anything done.

The history doesn't seem to offer much hope. For a full century, similar battles have roiled America's public schools. In the 1920s, a spate of state laws banned central scientific ideas. In the 1930s, the US Congress blocked teachers from mentioning the idea of communism—even when they were off-duty. Right here in Binghamton, the school board planned a bonfire of controversial history textbooks in the 1940s. Over and over, school politics have been vicious and violent, with school-board members attacked, school buildings bombed, and teachers under threat.

**YET THIS TURBULENT HISTORY OFFERS SURPRISING REASONS FOR OPTIMISM.** In this talk, Binghamton University historian Adam Laats shares the stories of the past and offers a new perspective for the future.

**Questions? Contact Pat Follette: 607-727-5748 [patfollette@outlook.com](mailto:patfollette@outlook.com)**