

REPORTING ON EXTREMISM

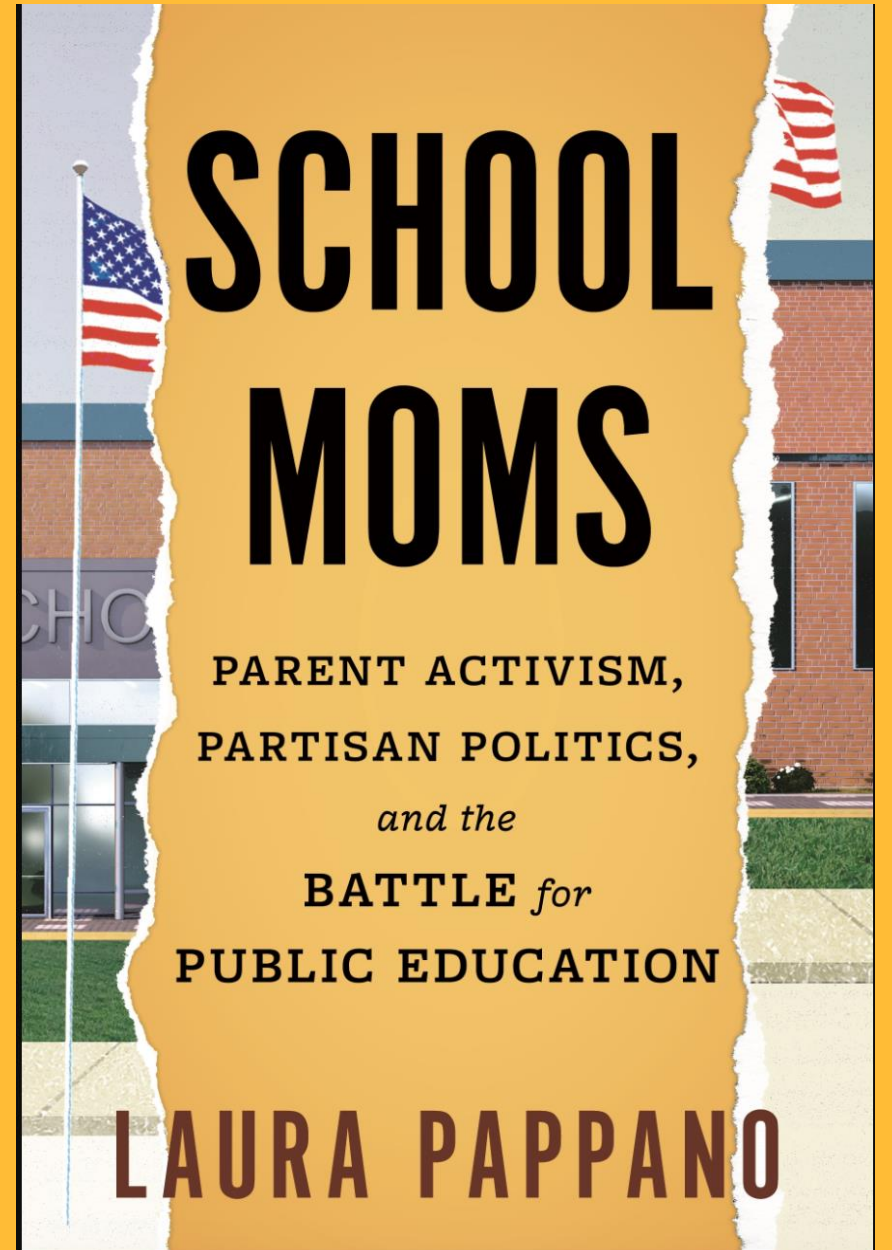
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Boots on the ground (obviously)

Be aware of false balance

- The attempt to avoid the appearance of bias can give credence to illogical, misinformed or problematic positions.
- EXAMPLES: Ronna McDaniel and NBC News, "both sides" reporting, characterizing M4L (or other well-connected and funded orgs) as a "grassroots" parent group, failing to grasp underlying agendas/sources of support.

My Essential Reporting Question:

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

This requires

- Understanding the context
- Digging into details, such as: **how** librarians are trained; **how** they curate collections; **how** collections are purchased; **how** curriculum is developed, chosen and purchased; **what** “social emotional learning” actually *looks like in class*; **what happens when** a curriculum is out of print and there is no new curriculum to replace it; **what does** a campus DEI space look like after DEI is outlawed? **Who is organizing?** **How** do they communicate? **How** does local government work (and **who has power**)?....ETC
- Hearing from a variety of sources, understanding their **motivations** as well as the **threats** they face
- Calling out misinformation: Don't repeat untrue information or phrasing! (As I have learned, even with air quotes – it doesn't work!!)
- Seeking clarity: **Don't add to the confusion.**

SOURCING

- Know the players and **connections between them**
- **Facebook remains a tool** for communication within communities; there is much history, info and emotion in posts.
- Boots on the ground, over time. **#showup**
- Seek **non-official email addresses** for sources fearing FOIA requests.
- Find **the connector**.
- **Check in** with people. **Appreciate** them.
- Know what's going on (watch SB meetings, legislative hearings etc...)
- Take screen shots because **things will disappear!**
- Know laws, jurisdictions (filings, campaign finance, local levies...)

Every place is not like every place else

- Even when issues seem the same – national rhetoric — local matters
- Recognize the contours of place and people; relevant history
- Embrace complexity
- People can be unpredictable and contradictory: that's OK (it doesn't mess up your story, it makes it richer!!)