



## ABOUT RISHAWN BIDDLE

RiShawn Biddle is Editor and Publisher of [Dropout Nation](#), the leading online publication covering and editorializing on education and the nation's school reform movement. A co-author of [A Byte At the Apple: Rethinking Education Data for the Post-NCLB Era](#), he combines journalism, research and advocacy to bring insight on the nation's education crisis and rally families and others to reform American public education.

Before founding [Dropout Nation](#), Biddle was an editorial writer for the *Indianapolis Star* covering education and urban affairs. There, he wrote and oversaw three award-winning special projects revealing the depths of the nation's dropout crisis and exposing judicial abuse against alleged juvenile offenders. Before becoming a tireless editorialist for school reform, Biddle was a reporter for such publications as *Forbes*, worked on news documentaries for ABC News, and reported on government and crime for newspapers in Atlanta, Ga.

As part of his advocacy and journalism efforts, Biddle has helped focus attention on the need to ensure that every child is taught by a high-quality teacher. This includes serving as co-author of [Invisible Ink in Collective Bargaining Agreements](#), a widely-cited report from the National Council on Teacher Quality that revealed the role of state laws, policies and lobbying in shaping contracts between school districts and teachers unions.

An accomplished public speaker, he has spoken at conferences sponsored by such organizations as the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, Reason Foundation and the National Conference of Editorial Writers. A commentator on radio and television, Biddle has also appeared on such shows as *Marketplace*, *Midmorning with Kerri Miller* and WWTC's *Northern Alliance Radio*. This year, Biddle was recognized by the Black Alliance for Educational Options as one of its first *Ed Reform Champions Under 40*, joining a group of advocates, educators, and school leaders transforming education for all children.

The New York City native – who now lives with his lovely wife, Davina, in Alexandria, Va. – has also written for such publications as *The New York Times'* Room for Debate, *USA Today*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Television Week*, *National Review*, *The Catholic World Report*, *Politico* and *The Los Angeles Daily News*. A communications and marketing consultant, he has also served as a speechwriter for education advocates such as actress Tichina Arnold, former National PTA President Chuck Saylor, current National PTA President Betsy Landers, and former National PTA CEO Byron V. Garrett. Biddle also served as Marketing and Creative

Services Officer for the Fulbright Scholar Program, overseeing the revamp of its communications, marketing, and publications.

As part of his role in spurring school reform, Biddle is consultant to the Black Alliance for Educational Options, the leading school reform organization for African-American families. He is also an advisory board member of the [Connecticut Parents Union](#), a group devoted to building Parent Power in education and giving families their rightful places as lead decision-makers and reformers in schools.

## **WHAT DRIVES RISHAWN**

When I graduated from high school two decades ago, I was only one of two kids in my class that had been admitted to college. Over the years, I wondered about where my schoolmates went -- and where the kids who were still in high school were going. So when I began asking where did the kids from Indianapolis Public Schools' graduating class of 2002 had gone -- and couldn't get clear answers -- my editorial page editor at the time asked me to look at the numbers and find out where the kids were. The answers -- for Indianapolis and the nation -- were shocking, and I could no longer look at the decrepit state of American public education the same way again.

I tell people that this isn't purely academic for me. These are kids, young boys and men, who look just like me. Many of them are growing up in neighborhoods that look like the one I grew up in South Ozone Park section of New York City in the 1980s. Some of them are living without fathers, like I did; some even are growing up on welfare, which I, as the third generation of my family to be in the middle class, was fortunate not to have to go through. I know what the future will hold for them if they don't graduate: Poverty, prison and despair. They deserve better than the systemic academic failures of our public education system. We need a revolution, not an evolution, in American public education.