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Florida Department of Education

Law Mandates African American Studies in Florida

Florida's Commissioner of Education Task Force of African American Studies was the driving force behind the amended law, 100.32(g) (2002), which "requires instruction in the history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples, and points in the direction of a new emphasis on the teaching of Ancient African history and connections to African Americans and African decent peoples in the Diaspora".

The Volusia County school district in Daytona Beach, Florida is the latest district to completely replace its curriculum in all subjects, grades k-12 to reflect one where history and events of Africans and African American is interwoven into the lessons. West Palm Beach and St. Lucie County are the other two school districts which led the way with their curricular change. In a

video interview, Jason Caros, Social Studies Curriculum Supervisor for Volusia County and Dr. Patrick Coggins, Professor of Education and Director of the Multicultural Education Institute at Stetson University explained how this law got onto Florida's state Law books and how important the journey was for the children and Educators in Florida. "People just don't know that Africans did not arrive in the country in 1608, but in the 1500's." Actually, the first African Americans came to Florida in the late 1500s. Most were enslaved in the British Colonies, but there were some free Africans who settled in St. Augustine.

The Task Force in Florida currently has 17 board members with Dr. Coggins as the Vice Chair. (con't on page 2)

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This Month in African American History

June 4, 1972 - Angela Davis acquitted of all murder and conspiracy charges.

June 5, 1987 - Dr. Mae C. Jemison becomes first Black woman astronaut.

June 7, 1917 - Poetess Gwendolyn Brooks first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize (Poetry 1950), born.

June 8, 1953 - Supreme Court ruling bans discrimination in Washington, D.C. restaurants

June 10, 1854 - James Augustine Healy, first African American Roman Catholic bishop is ordained

June 11, 1912 - Joseph H. Dickson patents player piano.

June 12, 1963 - Medgar W. Evers, civil rights leader, is assassinated in Jackson, Miss.

June 13, 1967 - Thurgood Marshall nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson.

June 14, 1864 - Congress rules that African American soldiers must receive equal pay

June 18, 1863 - The 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry attacks Fort Wagner, S.C.

June 19, 1865 - Black in Texas are notified of Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863. "Juneteenth," marks the event

Blackmarketplace.com



Summer Professional Learning Designed to

The Department of African & African American Studies will offer five sessions of Professional learning on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, as coined by Geneva Gay, Professor of Education and Associate of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington-Seattle.

The Cohort sessions will be held for three consecutive days throughout July and August. Participants will be able to earn nine hours. The sessions will begin with Disproportionality and end with promoting relationships with students and building the capacity of engagement in the classroom.

At the center of the Professional Learning is increasing student achievement through teaching

/connecting students using methods which are constructed with an understanding of the cultures and backgrounds of their students. The professional learning will not be a “sit-and-get” session. Participants will walk away transformed and armed with publications to support their transformation and support from the department of African & African American Studies that will come in the forms of text suggestions, lesson planning, observing and co-teaching.

The sessions will be held July 12-14, July 19-21, August 2-4, 9-10, 16-18 and 23-25. All teachers, counselors, administrator and specialized service staff are encouraged to attend. More information can be found on AVATAR.

Restorative Justice Training June 29th & 30th



Justice That Promotes Healing

The term “Peace Circles” is becoming a familiar term within RCSD schools looking to resolve behavioral issues that arise in schools. “Circle Time”, as it is sometimes referred to, is where a group of students have scheduled time with an adult. This time is structured with rules for communication and feedback. But the most important reason for the circle it that is designed to give the usual silent student a safe place to voice concerns.

Peace Circles are one component of Restorative Justice (Practice), which is a philosophy that contends that the strength of a community is based on relationships and positive communication. “Community Conferencing” is another component, which addresses wrongdoings and involves as many parties as possible to keep students in school and build peaceable school communities.

School resource officers (SRO) were the initial audience for the June training. However after conversations with Partners in Restorative Practices, Jeanne Carlivati, it was agreed that principals who work with the SRO should be invited as well.

For more information on registration for the training contact Djinga St. Louis or check the department’s webpage at www.rcsdk12.org/aaas.

African American Curriculum mandates, con't

There are 17 curriculum writers from the four major content areas (ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science) whose job it is to assist district in infusing their current curriculum with the Florida mandate.

The state of Illinois has a similar mandate on its law books. However it says nothing about the infusion of African American Studies into the curriculum. It states, "Every public or elementary school and high school shall include a unit of instruction studying the events of Black History..." (Para 27-20.4). The RCSD Department

of African American Studies believes that there should be a combination of the two, infusion of African & African American Studies and a separate, more intensive curriculum in African & African American Studies that would include a deeper understanding of African roots and the Diaspora. This education will hopefully lead to unity between the growing tensions between our African American and Hispanic youth here in Rochester.



Dr. Coggins, Djinga St. Louis & filmmaker Tyrone Young.

Filling in the Gap in African American History

Time after time our students are introduced to the history of African Americans with the depressing encounters and lifestyles of enslaved peoples of Africa. This information is largely delivered to our students courtesy of Euro-centric history books. What is *unknown* by our RCSD students and probably most students in the entire country, are the unsung African Americans who are a major part of history, but conveniently left out of history books.

time, spies for the Union Army, even a prince from Africa who was able to return after 40 years of enslavement.

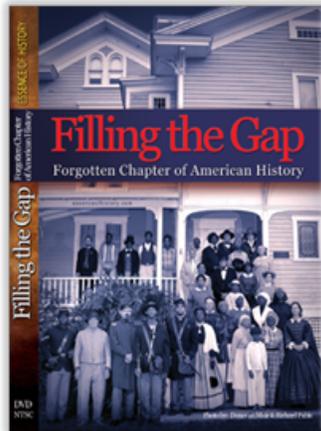
These stories and many others are in the DVD, which will be available for all teachers to access for the 2011-12 school year. August Professional Development is being planned for the use of the DVD and study guide.

Information on the DVD can be found at www.essenceofhistory.com



Joel & Mary Fears

Thanks to retired Media Specialist and current Civil War re-enactment actress, Mary Fears (pictured right) of Daytona Beach, Florida and the collaboration of filmmaker, Tyrone Young (pictured above right), those unsung heroes of the past are brought to life in the docudrama, *Filling in the Gap in American History: Forgotten Chapters of American History*.



The stories told are actual historic events that include African Americans who were business men and women during pre and post-civil war



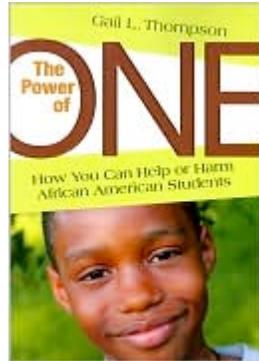
Mary Fears in Civil War-era dress



Summer Reading ...not just for students

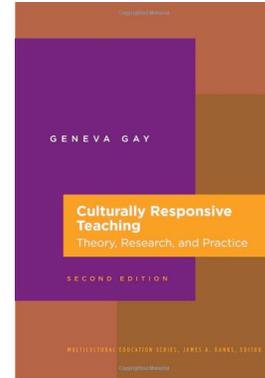
There are some great publications that I will recommend that can enhance teaching and learning as a practitioner in urban education. The list are the top three that I have read and may will serve as food for thought this summer.

We're on the Web!
www.rcdsk12.org/aaas

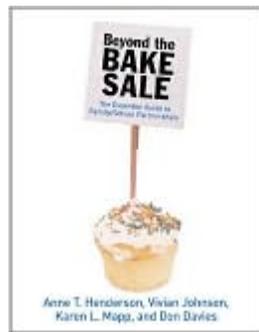


The Power of One: How You Can Help or Harm African American Students, by Gail Thompson. Extremely reflective and asks questions of its readers that are often not asked about beliefs and feeling when it comes to teaching urban African America students.

purpose) to the success of students and school communities. This book defines model relationships and how to get there with parents from diverse backgrounds.



Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, by Geneva Gay. A highly referenced book that digs deeply in to what it means to be a culturally responsive teacher. Gay details how connected cultural responsive teaching is to building authentic relationships with students and learning about their culture.



Beyond the Bake Sale by a. Henderson, K. Mapp, V. Johnson & D. Davies. Parents are Essential (the e is capitalized on

