

WHY EDUCATION AND THE ACCURATE TEACHING OF OUR HISTORY MATTERS

The State of Florida Board of Education recently issued new Academic Standards – Social Studies, 2023 which includes new African American History Curriculum Standards. As I am reviewing the curriculum, and will spend more time looking more critically at it, I note several of the Benchmark Clarifications in the curriculum normalizing the atrocities and the barbaric cruelties inflicted upon African Americans by offering alongside the barbaric cruelties inflicted upon African Americans similar types of circumstances that others have experienced. It is a classic example of whataboutism. Whataboutism is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as “the practice of answering a criticism or difficult question by making a similar criticism or asking a different but related question, typically starting with the words ‘What about?’”

Following are two specific and troubling Benchmark Clarifications for your consideration:

(Page 6) Benchmark Clarifications: *Clarification 1: Instruction includes how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit.*

(Page 17) Benchmark Clarifications: *Clarification 2: Instruction includes acts of violence perpetrated against and by African Americans but is not limited to 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, 1919 Washington, D.C. Race Riot, 1920 Ocoee Massacre, 1921 Tulsa Massacre and the 1923 Rosewood Massacre.*

In preparation of our discussions for the next several weeks, please read this excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, as Douglass shared Mr. Auld’s fear of the positive outcomes of educating the enslaved people:

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.

To use his own words, further, he said, “If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master - to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.” These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain.

I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty - to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it. Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master. Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.



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Beginning



Current



Your contribution can be dedicated to a specific activity or the Oasis, in general.

	Educational Enrichment	Technology Literacy	Athletics & Recreation	Performing Arts	Facility Innovation
\$500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 Subject books for elementary (math, literature, history, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 iPad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 basketballs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 art sets for aspiring artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External security lighting to keep the street well-lit and safe
\$1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Summer Bridge books to help students retain learning during breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 "learn how to code" kits for elementary students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 tennis rackets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 beginner saxophones or 8 beginner violins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camera security system to keep everyone safe
\$2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 students can be challenged to excel using interactive problem-solving programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 computer for graphic design and website creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 sets of golf clubs for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Play Scripts with performance/licensing fee and cast instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wireless PA system to easily communicate at the school
\$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 smartboard to help teachers engage students in learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 STEM lab cart of materials for a classroom with multiple activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-day Speed and Agility workshop for 15 young aspiring track stars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 pairs of tap shoes for aspiring dancers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery operated floor scrubber to keep the building looking its best
\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 trip for 15 students to visit 1 HBCU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Robotic kits to reinforce studies in STEAM subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open gym for 20 young people 1 X a week throughout the winter in a safe place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 tickets to see Alvin Ailey Dance Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED light fixtures throughout the school to promote learning and natural light

WORK FOR THE WEEK

JULY MEMORY VERSE

² for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—³ stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. ⁴We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders.

Psalm 78:2-4

JULY MEDITATION QUOTE

"We won a war concerning our freedom – the civil war. Then, we gave our children to our enemy to educate them"

Joanne Bland

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

What am I contributing to the life of a youth or child? _____

What youth or child in my immediate sphere of influence do I need to spend more time with?

FOR THE YOUTH

Who are the adults in my life who are contributing to my success? _____

Who are the adults in my life I need to spend more time with? _____
