

TO: Minnesota Legislature

RE: African American Registry Teacher Candidate Education Project

Please find the in the following report the scheduled update on HF 870.

Background of the project:

African American Registry® is the most comprehensive on-line repository of African American heritage in Minnesota. Our Mission is: Inspiring the Young Minds of Our Future. Our mission successfully supports education and the community in two ways relevant to HF 870:

- a. Service: Teacher candidate development through our Teacher Forum for more statewide E-12 classroom success. Our model includes coaching and ongoing support.
- b. Workforce: Teacher candidates will be better prepared to enter and thrive in the teaching profession by addressing the needs of MN students through the use of accessing a broader range of materials in all curriculum areas.

As a 501© 3 nonprofit, African American Registry concentrates on serving the educational needs of those seeking knowledge through a diverse learning experience. We merge historical facts and culture to create heritage with affirmation, critique and self-reflection in order to create an unmatched scholarship opportunity. Our online content stretches from Minnesota touching 125 countries and territories daily translating into 52 languages. Our pedagogy now has the opportunity to serve and strengthen the present and future of Minnesota through education.

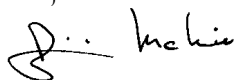
Beginning in Fall of 2017, HF 870 authorized African American Registry, www.aaregistry.org to implement its Teacher's Forum subscription service with two state universities, one private and one public until 2019. They are the School of Urban Education at Metropolitan State University and the School of Education at the University of St. Thomas. The goal is to improve the needed curriculum and pedagogy using of the Teacher's Forum with teacher candidates, juniors and seniors. This direct connection to the content of African American Registry will improve cultural competency of these candidates in higher education.

Need, Capacity, Use of Funds and Partners:

This project was proposed and initiated in order to improve the cultural competency of candidates seeking a first teaching license. The African American Registry partnership with Metropolitan State University and the University of St. Thomas is to reach up to 700 students over the duration of the project. Application is supported by the African American Registry's executive director, a campus liaison executive who is a professor at Metropolitan State University, another liaison who is a community director at the University of St. Thomas, our coaches, a program evaluator, online learning applications and website director plus IT departments from each campus.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) administered grant funding on October 1, 2017. We are constructing expenditures in 6 increments over the life of the grant period. Per fall semester, approximately 33% of the overall funds were used for the first year's term thus far. We are dispensing funding to all vendors and both campuses on this basis, the next scheduled payment will be March 30, 2018. This fiscal structure will progress throughout the lifetime of the legislative requirements of the grant. I would like to thank the State of Minnesota for their support of improved education through increased diverse curriculum in Minnesota classrooms.

Benjamin Mchie



African American Registry



January 2018 Report: Metropolitan State University and the University of St. Thomas

What follows is an outline regarding the project team, demographics of participants, narrative report of goals, implementation and outcomes for Fall of 2017, hereafter referred to as Phase 1 of the project.

- Program Leadership: Executive Director Benjamin Mchie, African American Registry; Dr. Rene Antrop-Gonzales, Dr. Rosa Fagundes, Metropolitan State University and Dr. Terri Vandercrook, Dr. Joseph Kreitzer, University of St. Thomas
- Diversity of participants: After one semester of implementation, self-reported student demographics are as follows:

Ethnicity	Locale of origin
20.6% African	30.8% Urban/City
11.8% African American	23% Suburb
14.7% Asian American	20.5% Small Town
35.2% White	10.3% Rural/country
6% Latino/a	
11.8% Other	

The Start:

African American Registry invested funding in hiring three professional classroom coaches and one evaluation expert to work hands on with the staff and students assigned. Our webmaster is redesigning our website to create a curriculum tracking system and assess its data gathered during the fall semester. Since mid-August, the 2017-2018 implementation plan was guided by over 20 professor signups between both campus schools of education for the fall semester. The following work plan was implemented:

1. The coaching team designed 3, 2 and 1 hour core sessions per classroom selected to participate in the Teacher's Forum service. The one-hour session was designed to introduce the African American Registry and navigation tools. Two or three-hour sessions were designed to include personalized support on a project or the opportunity for teaching candidates to do research on the site and present to the group.
2. Each session started with tools to introduce the Teacher's Forum and supported the preparation of Minnesota teaching candidates. Specific intensity (number of hours per session, number of sessions) was individualized according to course instructor input.
3. The design team individualized sessions according to professor input regarding time of semester, length and number of sessions. Thirteen class coaching periods were arranged in order for the Teacher's Forum coaches to conduct the classroom sessions and target specific goals and objectives aligned with each participating professor.



Data collection

The process of collecting data to assess the impact of the Teachers' Forum work began following the first classroom lesson. Between both campus schools of education, a total of 381 teacher candidates were reached during the fall semester. Assessment involved pre/post engagements with teaching candidates, course instructors, field-placement director and other key coordinators in MSU School of Urban Education. Written and electronic formats were used in order to maximize response opportunity and rate.

Goal and Objectives:

The goal of this project is to improve cultural competencies of teacher candidates across the state of Minnesota. This goal will be achieved through accomplishment of two objectives:

1. Expand teacher candidate knowledge base to reflect a diverse narrative
2. Provide teacher candidates with the tools to change a deficit narrative of E-12 students so they will develop a perspective of E-12 students as whole and competent.

Evaluation Data:

Objective 1: Expand teacher candidate knowledge base to reflect a diverse narrative. Data collected from post-coaching session evaluation forms, end of semester evaluations, and professor testimony suggested that the teacher candidate knowledge base is expanding after the first semester of implementation of this project. Findings are presented below.

1. Teaching candidates were asked to rate the value of content for educators, after having attended 1-2 class sessions learning about the Teacher's Forum and African American Registry. In the first wave of evaluation, 22 teaching candidates responded to this question, with 50% rating the content as extremely valuable (a rating of 5/5), 40.9% rating the value as a 4 out of 5, and 4.5% (1 student) rating a 3/5 and a 1/5.
2. In addition, students were asked to describe *why* they will use the African American Registry in their teaching.

Sample responses included:

- a) *Because it offers accurate, positive perspectives on history from the African American point of view.*
 - b) *To provide a truer account of history.*
 - c) *I will use the African American Registry because it contains a lot of information about people of color which is important to teach students.*
 - d) *A good lesson for white folks*
3. Finally, the extent to which we are achieving this objective is informed by professor feedback. Course instructors participating in the project were asked to describe why they chose to participate, what the African American Registry adds to content typically delivered



in class, and how it better prepares their students to be educators. Professors reported that The Registry expanded their own and their students' knowledge, adding valuable content to the teacher education curriculum.

Sample responses included:

- a) *It provides students with resources that reflect a broader range of backgrounds and experienced, and highlights events and people who are critical to our history but whose voices are often lost.*
- b) *I only have positive things to say about it. It is important information that I may not cover, but this is worthwhile.*
- c) *[The Registry provides] access to a massive resources that can help them make lessons and units more culturally relevant.*
- d) *It helps our students, first, to build their background knowledge and understanding about the world around them, it provides students with real resources to use with their students, and finally, it provides a model for future teachers concerning the quality of resources to put before their students.*

Objective 2: Provide teacher candidates with the tools to change a deficit narrative of E-12 students so they will develop a perspective of E-12 students as whole and competent.

1. We asked students to respond to one of three scenarios in which they were asked to discuss the idea that education should include a diverse narrative, expanding beyond the contributions of white people. Teacher candidates provided the greatest depth of information in response to this question out of all open-ended questions in the survey. One question asked, *During a lesson on American history, a student asks, "Why are all of these people white? Aren't there any people, places or episodes that are important or have to do with people of color?"*

Sample responses included:

- a) *History books have only told the narrative of the oppressors – or the white people. We will learn about the "other" narratives of Africans, slaves, Black Americans, the Indigenous, Asians, Asian Americans, etc.*
- b) *There definitely are. Since white people have been the majority for a long time, history classes are from their perspective. There is a site called the African American Registry. Let's explore it to find people, places and episodes that are important and have to do with people of color.*
- c) *There are many very important people of color that contributed to our history. Unfortunately much of our history textbooks only show history from one perspective and fail to include many of these amazing stories. I will make sure that in addition to using our book we will examine various other groups of people to learn more about their contributions and views of history.*
- d) *Yes! There are people, places, or episodes that are important and have to do with people of color. Remember, these books are written by the predominant group of people, whites. We need to change history and make sure people of color are in books because we did make history. We need to share who the Native Americans are, their history, and what really happened. We also need to share more about African Americans, Hmong Americans, etc.; they made history too.*



2. The teacher candidate evaluation asked students to rate how interesting the content of the African American Registry is for educators. The level of interest is believed to be a proxy for investment in changing the narrative. Ratings were as follows:
 - a) 41% Extremely (5/5)
 - b) 50% A lot (4/5)
 - c) 4.5% A medium amount (3/5)
 - d) 4.5% A little (2/5)

Lessons Learned and Next Steps:

The implementation and assessment of activities conducted during Phase 1 of the African American Registry Teacher Candidate Education Project provided support for our belief that this project is needed, timely, and shows emerging effectiveness in meeting project goals and objectives. Feedback from teacher candidates, professors, and African American Registry coaches provided direction for Phase 2 of this project.

Lesson 1: Teacher candidates are ready to learn how to apply what they know.

Phase 2 will include scaffolding from development of teacher candidate knowledge to application of content in the E-12 classroom and the development of a Discovery Guide 2. This developmental progression is supported by teacher candidate feedback and previous implementation experience, which is summarized below.

Classroom lessons about the African American Registry were supplemented with a student Discovery Guide, which provided questions for the students to answer while exploring the website. As a part of this process, students were asked to complete an exit ticket, one question on which asked what they still want to learn. Three themes emerged. Students reported that they want more time to explore the site, they want guidance on how to integrate this in their future classroom teaching, and they want direct access to the Teachers' Forum so they can access lesson plans and additional content.

In previous projects in which the Teachers' Forum was implemented with licensed teachers, the greatest barrier to implementation was time for teachers to seek out, understand, and use content that was not already incorporated into their lesson plans or pedagogical approach. By providing access and coaching to teaching candidates, we hope to give them the tools to seamlessly integrate African American Registry content into their teaching from the moment they begin working in E-12 education.

Phase 2 will incorporate increased opportunities for candidates to not only now explore further into the website with their username and password, but apply their discoveries to a variety of course requirements with a focus on developing culturally relevant projects (e.g., to explore, to access lesson plans with usernames and passwords, and to plan for how this content can be integrated with their teaching in the future.).



Lesson 2: Individualization is key.

Coaches' experiences in the college classroom during fall term have revealed a need to approach students at different points in their education and in their lives with differentiated approaches. It is important to avoid assuming that everyone is at the same place.

For example, coaches noted that people with educational experience or even teaching experiences in countries outside the US showed the most interest in approaching coaches afterward for clarification or actual comparisons. With this in mind, Phase 2 will be implemented with a plan to allow more time to work with teaching candidates to individualize coaching to ensure skills or tools are specific to the need.

Lesson 3: Stay the course.

One of the most positive findings from Phase 1 was that this group of teacher candidates is ready to learn. The great majority of responses in the classroom as well as on the evaluation forms indicated an enthusiasm for the content and a desire to know more about how to integrate the African American Registry into their teaching. This was measured by the eagerness the class in general when they returned from the "discovery assignment," their presentations to peers and the follow up questions. Coupled with data from teacher candidates and instructors regarding growth in knowledge and expanding narratives, this finding concludes that the Teachers' Forum project is working and will produce continued positive results as the implementation continues.

Summary

The coaching team encourages teacher candidates to have or develop their teaching personality in ways that will lead them to seek help when something is needed in the learning space and to have an interest in changing curriculum to meet the needs of all classrooms. The coaches adhere to the motto: "It's okay if they don't know what they need, just so long as they seek out what is needed". Education programs are here to fill those spaces with accessible, relevant, tools that supply those classroom essentials, as Minnesota has long been known to be progressive and to bring leadership to the field of education.

In this time of ever-increasing diversity, we aim to help the state reclaim its position as a leader in the preparation of teaching candidates. This is part of the motivation that continue to surface in conversations within the coaching team, the college classrooms, and beyond when the topic of why "teachers need accessible resources that are current, culturally engaging and designed to meet the needs of a range of students" is discussed. We are encouraged with number of rural teaching candidates we are reaching and the encouraging benefits they are experiencing with our service. The support of the Minnesota Legislature is most appreciated, and is contributing to the development of cultural competence among teacher candidates who will go forth to affect change in E-12 classrooms across the state.

