

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:

1. Service: Teacher candidate development through our Teacher Forum for more statewide E-12 classroom success. Our model includes culturally responsive coaching and ongoing support for developing an inclusive curriculum. .
2. 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 African American heritage. Such engagements bring affirmation, critique and self-reflection for all students in order to create an unmatched scholarship opportunity. Our online content stretches from Minnesota to touch 125 countries and territories daily translating into 52 languages. Our pedagogy brings forth the opportunity to serve and strengthen the present and future educational professional of Minnesota.

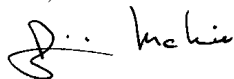
Beginning in Fall of 2017, HF 870 authorized African American Registry, www.aaregistry.org to implement its Teacher's Forum subscription service with two state universities, one private and one public until 2019. They are the School of Urban Education at Metropolitan State University and the School of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

Need, Capacity, Use of Funds and Partners:

This project was proposed and initiated in order to improve the cultural proficiency of future 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 teacher candidates 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 professor 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 2018, approximately 66% of the overall funds were used for the second 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, 2019. 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 2019 Report: Metropolitan State University and the University of St. Thomas

What follows is report of implementation, goals and outcomes for Spring, 2018-Fall, 2019, hereafter referred to as **Phase 2** of the project.

Program Leadership: Executive Director Benjamin Mchie, African American Registry; Dr. Rene Antrop-Gonzales, Dr. Rosa Fagundes, Metropolitan State University and Dr. L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan and Dr. Katherine Holmes-Campbell, University of St. Thomas

Diversity of participants: During Phase 1, teacher candidates self-reported the following ethnicity, which is a continued trend according to professor report in **Phase 2**:

Ethnicity continued trend
20.6% African
11.8% African American
14.7% Asian American
35.2% White
6% Latino/a
11.8% Other

DIVERSITY IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Teacher candidates represented a range of racial and ethnic groups, and came to college from rural, small town, suburban, urban, military and international backgrounds.

Locale data were collected Phase 1 and **Phase 2**

Locale of origin	
2017	2018 ¹
30.8% Urban	49% Urban
23% Suburb	31% Suburban
20.5% Small Town	17% Rural
10.3% Rural	1% Military

Phase 2 Implementation:

African American Registry invested funding in hiring three professional classroom coaches and one evaluation expert to work hands on with the staff and teacher candidates assigned. We've now added two more and wish to offer a 'teach the teacher' scholarships to engage participating colleges and universities while complimenting and expanding this project.

We have added ADA supports in our tutorial and lesson plans using closed captioning. Our redesigned website uses a curriculum tracking system and assess its data gathered during the fall semester. Since mid-August, the 2018-2019 **Phase 2** is guided by over 20 professor signups between both campus schools of education for the fall semester, including new staff and adjunct.

¹ In addition the locales listed, teacher candidates listed military and international backgrounds.



The following work plan was implemented:

1. Sessions were designed in 1-3 hour blocks. 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, in order to support the diverse learning needs of Minnesota students.**
3. During 2018, **thirty-nine** classroom sessions were provided for Minnesota teacher candidates across both universities. Some professors requested multiple sessions.

Data collection

The process of collecting data to assess the impact of the Teacher's Forum work began following the first classroom lesson. Between both campus schools of education, a total of 500 teacher candidates were reached during the fall semester 2018. Assessment involved pre/post engagements with teacher candidates, course instructors, field-placement director and other key coordinators in Metropolitan State University School of Urban Education and University of State Thomas. In order to maximize response opportunity and rate, written and online formats were used.

Goal and Objectives:

The goal of this project was and 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. This is structured in our Discovery² methods of compiling candidate responses. We begin use with Discovery 1 and 2, content introduction and channeling teacher candidates towards career readiness. Data collected from post-coaching session evaluation forms, end of semester evaluations, and professor testimony suggested that the teacher candidate knowledge base expands after implementation of this project. Findings are presented below.

² Discovery guides were provided for each class. These are structured learning guides questions with learning activities.

VALUE-ADDED

During 2018 classroom lessons, teacher candidates reported that the African American Registry and Teacher's Form would be very to extremely valuable in their teaching careers. After 239 ratings, 81% of ratings fell into this range



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. Following high value ratings in Phase 1, the trend continued into 2018, with the average rating across **239** ratings being **4.38 on a scale from 1-5**. This breaks down to less than 3% of participants rating the value at a level of 1 or 2 (not very valuable), 12% of participants rating the value of the African American Registry at a 3 (moderate value) and **over 81% of participants rating the value of the content of the African American Registry and Teacher's Forum as a 4 or a 5 (very valuable)**.
2. In addition, teacher candidates 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*
 - e) *Something like this is key to help teachers bring diverse perspectives and knowledge to the class!*
 - f) *There is rich African American history in all subjects/ topics/ activities, so it's important to bring these histories and people to life in my classroom, in order to relate to students, interest them, and enrich their education.*
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 supplements content typically delivered in class, and how it better prepares their teacher candidates to be educators. Professors reported that The Registry expanded their own and teacher candidates' 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 resource 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 expanded tools to change a deficit narrative of E-12 students so they will develop a practiced perspective of E-12 buildings, administrations, peers and the communities they serve. Discovery 3 and 4 (respectively) engage in Role Play and insert our Lesson Plans related to state standards. This more effectively uplifts teacher candidates' competence by helping them being more culturally whole and competent themselves.

1. During the first year of implementation, we asked teacher candidates 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, which led to the increased focus on this domain in **Phase 2**. 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 teacher candidates 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)
 3. In **Phase 2** (2018-2019), the coaching team developed role plays as a teaching tool through which teacher candidates could practice responding to racial intolerance or resistance to an inclusive curriculum. These role plays were designed to be presented to teacher candidates who had already been exposed to the African American Registry site. Teacher candidate evaluations indicated that some teacher candidates had not been exposed to the African



American Registry before and expressed a desire to spend more time exploring, similar to the feedback Discovery 1 elicited. Even in these cases, however, the role plays were valuable according to teacher candidate reports.

- a) Teacher candidates reported that hearing other people’s responses to the role plays was very helpful.
 - b) Multiple teacher candidates reported that something they learned was how to **ask questions** in response to racial intolerance or push back to an inclusive curriculum.
 - c) Verbalizing the term “Diversity” beyond color, culture or race to intersect with the individual student and their distinct learning styles was a consistent Role Play response.
 - d) **Impromptu problem solving** was reported by coaches and reflected in teacher candidate feedback about their learning. The capacity to respond and problem solve in the moment will take Minnesota teachers around the world.
4. Finally, teachers were asked *how* they would use the African American Registry in their classrooms. Responses varied widely, suggesting wide application potential in Minnesota’s E-12 classrooms. Teacher candidates believed that they would use the content to:
- a) Educate themselves
 - b) Educate other teachers
 - c) During warm-up activities, including having students look up content relevant to today’s date or their birthday
 - d) Enrich student research
 - e) Inform and broaden specific activities in their content areas
 - f) Model lifelong learning to their students
5. Teacher’s Forum coaches brought an average of 20 years of classroom experience to the coaching sessions. This enabled them to diversify lessons with varied methods and examples to reach a wider range of teacher candidates, including those who were familiar with the African American Registry and those who were novices. Strategies included:
- a) A range of methods, including demonstration, case studies, teacher candidate discovery time, teacher candidate report out, review of the African American Registry, and role plays.
 - b) The expertise of the coaches allowed for in-the-moment adaption, including asking the teacher candidates questions such as, “What are you thinking about how this might be useful in your work as teachers?” and “what questions do you have, or what can I help you with, as the coach for your class?” This helped to ensure that teacher candidates were consistently provided with coaching that would elevate their level of knowledge and skill in cultural competency and use of the African American Registry.

EXPERIENCED COACHES ENHANCE LEARNING

Our coaches have an average of 20 years of experience in education, enabling deeper discussions, in-the-moment problem solving, standards- linked lessons, and continuous enhancement of planned Teacher’s Forum lessons.



Lessons Learned, Outcomes and Next Steps:

The implementation and assessment of activities conducted during **Phase 2** 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 and exceeding 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 to benefit Minnesota classrooms.

Phase 2 included scaffolding from development of teacher candidate knowledge to application of content in the E-12 classroom and the development of advanced Discovery Guides, role plays, and lesson plans linked to state standards. This strategy of using a developmental progression in implementation 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 teacher candidate Discovery Guide, which provided questions for the teacher candidates to answer while exploring the website. As a part of this process, teacher candidates were asked to complete an exit ticket, one question on which asked what they still want to learn. Three themes emerged. Teacher candidates 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 Teacher's Forum, so they can access lesson plans and additional content. In **Phase 2**, lesson plan access was granted, and teacher candidate evaluation data indicated that this was helpful, and that they continued to find the time to explore the site valuable.

In previous projects in which the Teacher's 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. Teacher candidate feedback suggests that these efforts are successful, in that they see **value** in the use of the Teacher's Forum content for their future classrooms and have many and varied ideas about how to incorporate this content into their work across age level and subject area. Our time with higher education teaching departments has shown a need for stronger initial dean or chair promotion with their faculty with our service, we have seen improvement in year two and must strive together with them for perfection.

Lesson 2: Individualization is key.

Coaches' experiences in the college classroom during fall term 2018 have revealed a need to approach teacher candidates 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.



This finding held true during **Phase 2**, as coaches individualized their approaches to meet the needs of teacher candidates who came from different points in their education and who had varying levels of exposure to the African American Registry. In **Phase 2**, we held classes in which everyone was a novice, and those in which almost all teacher candidates had seen the site before. Using feedback from Phase 1, coaches were ready to diversity their approaches, and these methods were met with appreciation from teacher candidates.

Lesson 3: Goals are moving forward

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 of 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 Teacher’s Forum project is working and will produce continued positive results as the implementation continues.**

Outcomes: Role Play, State Standards, Building Alliances:

One basic and critical outcome was that we increased the number of teacher candidates whose training is enriched with the Teacher’s Forum. In addition, we were able to deepen discourse using the Teacher’s Forum through repeat classroom visits as well as role plays led by coaches. During spring, summer and fall semesters of 2018, our coaches supported **thirty-nine** class sessions across two universities.

In addition, in **Phase 2** we enhanced our classroom assessments with Role Play exercises for teacher candidates to assist each teacher candidate to act out real life teaching experiences. The primary objectives for this experience were to highlight the truth that everyone’s diversity is relevant, and to support our teacher candidates in seeing the world as global citizens through a broad lens that includes race, ethnicity and social class. Exercises included conversations with:

- Parents, students or another community member.
- Equity team representative, assistant principal or principal
- Fellow teacher who may or may not have tenure or more experience.

Listening to teacher candidates we sensed they wanted a more direct resource to use diverse content and method to strengthen state standards. Our Coaching team created a set of Thematic lesson plans in order too:

- Tap into the student’s multiple intelligences, ways of looking at the world
- Use the Teacher’s Forum’s vast array of content voices, history, literature sciences and people.



- Draw on the way a student learns, free them up to be a more critical thinker.

The African American Registry® curriculum and pedagogy was created for classrooms to explore information both as window and as mirror, in order to reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student herself or himself. We also bring intersectionality with other genders, races and cultures out of the curriculum closet for a balanced, natural sense of their place(s) in the world. One of the most honest findings from **Phase 2** was unearthing this through this group of teacher candidates applied to the teaching profession.

Next Steps

Our goal for 2021 is to expand and deepen our reach across the state of Minnesota to provide coaching on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy and provide ongoing support to teachers in the classroom. We've created a new and strategic alliance with **Education Minnesota** as a point of reference to track teacher candidates who have had our service prior to becoming licensed. With this collaborative we wish to expand our assessment into the workforce for the entire state of Minnesota and beyond. In addition, African American Registry Teacher's Forum team members Dr. Yvonne Banks and Ms. Ea McMillan Porter are working at their respective universities to expand the project beyond teacher education.

Immediate next steps are to expand implementation into MSU Mankato teacher education, with continued partnership with Metropolitan State University and St. Thomas University. In addition, we aim to connect with field placement coordinators/directors in teacher education programs in order to reach teacher candidates who are about to move into classroom settings within the current calendar year. This idea rose from collaboration with Education Minnesota, and will allow us to examine the impact of the African American Registry in Minnesota classrooms, and will help to create change for Minnesota children and schools. The Metro State University School of Teacher education has already seen benefit of the Teachers Forum with newly placed teachers. This information is gathered through a program that they implement with new teachers during their first three years of their careers. In this format, new teachers come back to the classroom twice per year to talk about their experience and participating in mentoring in enhancing their teaching practice with tools such as the African American Registry.

In the following years, we are aiming to reach all public and private colleges and universities in the state. Inclusive curriculum is important for all of Minnesota's students, and increasing diversity across the state highlights this fact. The website's video overview of TF coaches should make our connection stronger with other schools in the higher education system of Minnesota, as it provides insight into the coaches' work in education. By connecting with Tribal Colleges, two-year and four-year education programs in greater Minnesota, we can expand the awareness and use of curriculum-enhancing content such as that embedded in the African American Registry.

Next steps for our state are to consider the ecology in which teacher candidates and all educators do their work. It may benefit districts most directly if the hiring process incorporates principles of knowledge and skill in fostering a diverse narrative and dismantling a deficit narrative. For example, districts will be more likely to find teachers who have these skills if the interview process asks



candidates *how* they make their lessons culturally competent. Finally, our focus has been on teacher candidates, but curriculum starts before them. Key leadership in state and school district positions will have a strong impact if they can support cultural competency with their attitudes and action.

The support of the Minnesota Legislature is most appreciated and is contributing to the development and in our expansion of cultural competence among teacher candidates who will go forth to affect change in E-12 classrooms across the state. In this year alone we have reached 500 teacher candidates and evaluation feedback shows that the content is needed, appreciated, and useful.

Summary

Part of education's power is its ability to heal through knowledge. African American Registry's Teacher's Forum encourages teacher candidates to develop their teaching personality in ways that lead them to create the learning space and interest by amending curriculum to meet the needs of all classrooms.

Minnesota has long been known to be at the forefront of bringing leadership to the field of education. The Teacher's Forum's goal is to support that long history and ensure that Minnesota raises its position in the nation.

In this time of ever-increasing diversity, we aim to move with Minnesota as it reclaims its position as a leader in the preparation of teaching candidates. Our data and testimonies show growth and confidence needed to produce a long lasting harvest of Minnesota teachers. This is being achieved through the African American Registry Teacher Candidate Education Project as teacher candidates increased knowledge following coaching and high value in the African American Registry. The support of the Minnesota Legislature to the Teacher's Forum contribution to this development and is greatly appreciated.

