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D.A. HOLMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Proposal for an AFRICAN CENTERED Theme School

PROPOSAL OBJECTIVE: To identify the mission, goals and rationale for the development of an **African Centered Theme** approach to urban educational reform infusing fundamental cultural precepts throughout the curriculum and teaching process of the D.A.Holmes ~~Chies~~ Elementary School.

RATIONALE: Curricular treatment of the African Amaerican experience in America had drawn attention to the fact that Africian Amaericans have historically played a crucial role in the development of the United States. This reality has been true from the first settlements of British colonists in Virginia, through the American Revolution and the Civil War, down to the present. More often than not, the unique place of African Americans has been misunderstood and this ignorance has inevitably produced hatred and fear. Psychologists have even discovered that a considerable amount of self-hatred and denial of their African roots exists with African American students who have not been taught of their African origins in ways that increase their self-esteem, and self-worth. Because education plays such a vital role in the formation of our youth, the impact of African Americans can not be ignored or disguised under the banner of "multicultural " education or "world/global" studies. It deserves the same level of respect to exist as a primary focal point as an Asian studies magnet proposal acknowledges the need for a singular point of reference with a complementary theme-based language infusion.

D.A. HOLMES REVISED MISSION STATEMENT: The administration recognizes that the name of the school may eventually need to be changed to maintain consistency with an African Centered theme. Nonetheless, the proposed revised school mission statement shall be:

D.A. Holmes Elementary School aspires to be a model of academic excellence in urban school reform educating the whole child using an African Centered context to accelerate the intellectual, emotional, physical, and moral development of the student combined with a culturally appropriate instructional pedagogy and curriculum designed to empower, stimulate and motivate in a child-centered environment condusive to leadership and responsibility.

THE AFRICAN CENTERED GOAL: The goal for the African centered theme school is based on the AFRICAN principle of collectivism/"we ness"; interdependency; oneness of being/nature and a sense of all things being one and of the same spirit/essence. The educational process is repositioned as a means to an end to address the African centered precept of "the meaning of being and becoming", essentially the issues of inner discipline and responsibility to self and others becomes the focal point. The primary goal therefore is:

To develop self conscious, fully functioning members of society who are competent, confident (can do attitude), conscious (aware of who they are and their responsibilities), committed (willing to work for a better tomorrow/world), and contributing human beings.

The African centered perspective demands a different way of thinking. Cognitive educational strategies using skills, information, and knowledge are placed within the context of being. Affective educational methods examining the knowledge of self and self-potential are explored in the context of becoming (i.e. who you are, what you want to become, and what stands in the way of it). The African centered perspective advances the cognitive and affective approaches towards a functional application exploring how one can apply his knowledge toward negotiating the multicultural, political and socio-economic realities of his world.

THE AFRICAN CENTERED OBJECTIVES: The objectives are derived from the AFRICAN cosmology stressing that everything is interconnected and what people of African decent have done in the past is connected to what we can do in the future. The achievement of the objectives is contingent upon conscious efforts to re-educate, re-orient, and restore accurate cultural and historical values as a foundation to goal attainment without sacrificing conventional achievement. The objectives are designed to address the fundamental questions 1) who am I, 2) am I really who I am, and 3) am I all I ought to be. The educational process is a context. Inherent in this perspective is the administrative responsibility to raise the teacher's social awareness, social proficiency and cultural competence.

THE AFRICAN CENTERED PERSPECTIVE

THE INTENT: The intent of the African Centered Perspective is multifaceted:

1. To promote fully functioning (perfected) caring member of society;
2. To enhance the psycho-cultural competencies;
3. To develop a sense of identity/belonging, sense of power, security, trust, permanence, test of courage, character and commitment;
4. To increase the resilience (ability to rebound from disappointments, anger, etc.), protective factors (feeling safe in a safe environment) and inculcation (knowing others care and caring for others).

THE CONTENT: The content will revolve around the following four areas:

1. Human perfectibility
2. Academic excellence/mastery of core competencies
3. Infusion of African perspectives and contributions throughout the curriculum
4. Internalization of the highest African values

THE PROCESS: The process will utilize the following five activities:

1. Thinking/analyzing activities
2. Feeling activities (drama, dance, classroom informal discussion meetings, etc.)
3. Doing activities (emphasizing cooperative learning)
4. Language/proverbs/folktales/rap

THE OUTCOMES: The following six outcomes are anticipated:

1. Self conscious, fully functioning member of society
2. Competent (striving to be 'Mo Better)
3. Confident (can do mentality)
4. Conscious (aware of who he is and his responsibility)
5. Committed (willing to work for a better world)
6. Contributing

AFRICAN CENTERED PROPOSED METHODOLOGIES

1. To develop a strong sense of collectivism/"we ness" and interdependence.

METHOD: creative cooperative learning, classroom meetings, community projects, parent/student homework assignments, schoolwide activities such as Spelling Bees, Math Bees, Science Bees, etc., meaningful involvement of parents & elders as volunteers in the classroom, greater promotion of Success Day, Bankers Day, Parents Day, Fathers Day, etc. to pull the community into the educational process and the school environment opportunities for older students to serve as helpers/tutors to younger students, increased activities to demonstrate commitment to and preservation of high community qualities, student regrouping, African Clubs, Business Clubs, Political Clubs, and clubs devoted to diverse and specific skills such as mechanics, painting, journalism, law, science, medicine, etc., teacher "sponsorship" approaches to problem solving, parent support classes, Rites of passages activities, opportunities to demonstrate collective responsibility, cooperation and harmony, increased opportunity to experience issues related to the preservation of life, and classroom student/teacher governance in establishing and monitoring classroom norms/discipline, incorporation of strategies to resurrect, cultivate and surrogate the parenting role and function especially for the African American male child through inclusion of groups such as the Coalition of 100 Black men, Simba, the National Urban League, Black United Front, and Greek Fraternity mentoring programs, and the Year 2000.

2. To enhance the psycho-cultural competencies.

METHOD: increase classroom discussion sessions to promote analytical skills, immersion in experiences rather than observation of experiences, cultural infusion throughout each discipline, symbols, images, texts that uplift self-image, develop a sense of power and control over one's behavior, constructive conflict resolution opportunities, youth involvement in planning, assessing progress, and solving problems, emphasis on developing intrinsic motives, opportunities to distinguish from right and wrong, increased activities to work in harmony with others, classroom climates that allow students to be free from resentment when punished or wronged, to expanded fun/discovery in learning activities through regularized rapping and dancing to encourage converting literary passages or biographies of historical figures into rap lyrics and perform them for the class, , expansion of the Junior Achievers entrepreneur concept, theme related academic varsities, History Marathons and History Decathlons, Black History Bazaars, rejecting punishment and rewards in favor of teacher/student generated strategies geared toward internalization of prosocial **African centered** values and norms, greater use of culturally appropriate literature-based reading programs that stimulates discussion about values and offers examples complementary of and which value differences, opportunities to experience and practice flexibility and caring for self and others.

3. To increase the resilience, protective factors and inculcation.

METHOD: emphasis on practicing perspective-taking skills, consensus building opportunities, expanded activities to practice sensitivity and empathy, open communication, trust and academic assertiveness through academic competitive teams, self-knowledge activities, right and left brain development activities, expanded use of functional routines, rituals, scenarios, and processes for high achievement and internalization of values and the **African centered** perspective, consistent teacher monitoring of student's reading and mathematics skill mastery process, increased opportunities for daily successes and multiple methods to examine practical application of knowledge and information through stories, examples, etc., inclusion of materials and techniques for diverse learning styles, pacing and progress, expansion of school day and other needed times during the day for tutoring and small group instruction for students who need reinforcement, reteaching, and remediation, increase in student attendance patterns, utilization of highly structured classrooms moderated by affection and consideration, nongraded, team teaching activities to help students learn more effectively, opportunities to develop commitment to being generous or respectful, increased opportunities for educators to practice diverse kinds of discipline and instruction in the context of a warm, nurturant, and empathic relationship with students.

EVALUATION CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

1. Thinking activities
2. Feeling activities
3. Doing activities
4. Language/proverbs/folktales
5. Collective Responsibility/Community involvement activities

EVALUATION CRITERIA COMPONENTS

1. Cognitive education - skills, information, knowledge.
2. Affective education - knowledge of self & self potential; who are you; what you want to become; and what stands in the way of it.
3. Functional education - how one can apply his knowledge toward negotiating the cultural/multicultural, political & socio-economic realities of his world.