

**Preface
To The
African/African-American
Baseline Essays**

Spring 1987



**Matthew W. Prophet
Superintendent**

**Portland Public Schools
501 N. Dixon Street
Portland, Oregon 97227**

PPS Geocultural Baseline Essay Series

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FOREWARD

The Portland Public Schools' Board of Education is committed to quality education for all students. Our School District is staffed by individuals who are committed to excellence in education. The African-American Baseline Essays are but one part of a larger product to be developed to fulfill the Board of Education's goal:

...to develop in all students a better understanding and appreciation of the history, culture, and contributions to society of different ethnic groups and cultures.

The Baseline Essays provide information about the history, culture, and contributions of Africans and African-Americans in the disciplines of Art, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Music and should be used by teachers and other District staff as a reference and resource just as adopted textbooks and other resources are used.

Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III (an educator and psychologist) who has gained national and international recognition for his work with large urban school districts in the areas of student achievement, special education, and psychological development, has been primary consultant to the African-American Baseline Essay project. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, and Association of Black Psychologists, and currently holds the Fuller E. Calloway Chair at Georgia State University.

Each of the Baseline Essays has been authored by an individual who is both knowledgeable about the specific discipline and recognized as an expert on African and African-American history. In addition, the essays have been circulated and reviewed by many individuals and groups (i.e., the Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, the Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Task Force, Curriculum Department Subject Matter Specialists, and the African-American Curriculum Consultants).

The Curriculum Department, through its Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Office and the Curriculum Department and Services Unit, will support the inservicing of the African-American Baseline Essays with:

- staff inservice sessions
- lesson plans
- video tape presentations by the authors of the Baseline Essays

As Superintendent of the Portland Public School District, I commend the Curriculum Department and the African-American community for working together to finalize the African-American Baseline Essays. Special thanks are due to Ms. Carolyn M. Leonard, our Coordinator of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education, for her professional dedication to the effort. These essays have already gained recognition in other school districts and I am confident that our staff will use the information to work toward full implementation of the Board of Education goal.

Dr. Matthew Prophet
Superintendent, Portland Public Schools

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Office

The Staff

Carolyn M. Leonard
Coordinator of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education

Herman A. Washington
Curriculum Administrator

Joy Hicks
MC/ME Education Teacher on Special Assignment

Judy Madden
MC/ME Education Teacher on Social Studies Cadre

Camille Hinman
MC/ME Education Office Secretary

Abelardo Eric Van Blaricom
MC/ME Education Office Student Assistant
(Grant High School)

Carlos R. Taylor
Director of Curriculum

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Portland Public School District has broken new ground with the publication of the African-American Baseline Essays. These essays represent one part of a huge multicultural curriculum-development effort initiated at the beginning of this decade of the eighties.

Without a doubt, the key stimulus for the quest for fundamental equity was the Black Community advocates. The African-American Baseline Essays are one of several products that are a direct result of the interaction of the Black United Front and the Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee with the Portland School District. Following the community-based leadership of these two organizations, a number of other agencies and individuals joined in what has become one of the most comprehensive development activities in the nation.

The concept of Baseline Essays was introduced to Portland Public Schools in 1981 by Dr. Asa G. Hillard, III, who states: "The Baseline Essay is intended to be a short story of the experience of a particular geo-cultural group* within a particular academic area from earliest times to the present. The Baseline Essay itself is primarily, though not exclusively, a resource document for the teacher. It provides a sense of coherence, continuity, and comprehensiveness to the experience of a particular group within a given academic area. Taken all together, the Baseline Essays are the story of a people."

Six scholars were commissioned to write the African-American Baseline Essays:

Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Professor Emeritus of African World History,
Hunter College, New York City

Mr. Hunter Havelin Adams, III, Research Scientist of Argonne National
Laboratories, Chicago

Ms. Beatrice Lumpkin, Malcolm X College, Chicago

Ms. Joyce Braden-Harris, Director of Black Education Center,
Portland, Oregon

Mr. Michael Harris, Assistant Professor at Morehouse College of Atlanta

Dr. Charsee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, Associate Professor of
Humanities, State University of New York – Old Westbury

The authors worked closely with the African-American Curriculum Consultants: Joyce Harris (Social Science), Kamau Anderson (Science), McKinley Burt (Mathematics), Clyde Taylor (Language Arts), and Janice Ingersoll-Williamson (Art) to produce the published version of each essay.

*The Portland School District has identified six geo-cultural groups: African-American, Asian-American, European-American, Hispanic-American, Indian-American, and Pacific Island-American.

Dr. Hilliard states: “While lesson plans and curriculum guides may have direct links to day-to-day planning, the Baseline Essays should provide the professional teacher a general perspective and references that will help to clarify the isolated information that appears in the curriculum guides or standardized tests.”

Organization of the African-American Baseline Essays’ Notebook

The Essays are preceded by a definition of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education and a statement regarding the Implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education in Portland Public Schools. Each of the Baseline Essays is a complete work in and of itself with its own introduction, illustrations, and numbering system.

Use of the African-American Baseline Essays

These essays are one part of a staff in-service package designed to give basic information about the history, culture, and contributions of African and African-American people. Video tapes of the authors of the essays and lesson plans are to be used to introduce, discuss, and implement instruction that presents a more comprehensive picture of this geo-cultural group. While the District has sponsored the development of the Essays, the authors are responsible for the content of their respective essays.

Special Acknowledgments

The scholars who authored the Baseline Essays worked closely with the African-American Curriculum Consultants in the review and editing of the essays. District support services such as Word Processing, Publication Services, and the District artist supported the development of the final product. As coordinator of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education, I supervised the developmental process, developed the page format, and completed the final review. The packaging, which included the selection of notebooks and the logo (on the front of the notebooks) and work with the publisher, was supervised by Herman A. Washington, Curriculum Administrator. The design on the notebook cover was drawn by Judy Madden, artist and teacher on special assignment on the District social studies cadre.

The process of writing, editing, and publishing the African-American Baseline Essays could not have been completed without Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III, national consultants (i.e., Dr. Ivan Van Sertima; Oscar Brown, Jr.; Julian Euell; and Harold Courlander); the scholars who willingly spent time editing and re-editing their final drafts; Dr. Darrell Millner of Portland State University; Joyce Harris; Dr. William A. Little; Dr. Erasmus Chuks Ogbuobiri; Dr. Carolyn L. Moilanen; Dr. Ernest E. Hartzog and numerous other individuals who read and reread pre-publication copies of the essays. They are the collective work of individuals dedicated to assisting Portland Public Schools in its movement toward “education that is multicultural.”

Carolyn M. Leonard
Coordinator of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education

MULTICULTURAL/MULTIETHNIC EDUCATION

A Definition....

Multicultural/Multiethnic Education is education that prepares the student to live, learn, and work in a pluralistic world by fostering appreciation, respect, and tolerance for people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education in PPS

For teachers, counselors, administrators, and other Portland Public Schools' staff, Multicultural/Multiethnic Education (Education that is Multicultural) is education that provides three critical components:

1. **Specific content** that provides a balance of information about the history, culture, and contributions of six identified geo-cultural groups (i.e., African-American, Asian-American, European-American, Hispanic-American, Indian-American, and Pacific Island-American)¹;
2. **A structured process** designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and
3. **A perspective** (a philosophy and educational attitude) that guides one in the selection and infusion of information and challenges one to deliver "education that is multicultural" or other school-related services in a manner that promotes access and equity.

Effective implementation of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education (Education that is Multicultural) will establish for the learners the fact that:

1. Individuals from each of the six geo-cultural groups have made significant contributions.
2. No one geo-cultural group is innately inferior or superior to another. All geo-cultural groups have made significant contributions.
3. People are interdependent and need one another.

Infusion of Multicultural/Multiethnic Education into all curricular areas should:

1. Build an awareness of one's own cultural and ethnic heritage;
2. Develop an understanding, respect, and appreciation for the history, culture, and contributions of other groups; and
3. Eliminate personal and national ethnocentrism so that one understands that a specific culture is not intrinsically superior or inferior to another.

¹The system of geo-cultural groupings is the simplest method of locating and retrieving information. It is designed to include people all over the world. Cultural groups are (in so far as possible) identified by their location on or near the continents.

The following are general suggestions that can be used to help bring about greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity:

1. Members of minority groups and women should be shown as meaningful participants in all phases of local, state, national, and international life. Classroom experiences as well as extra curricular activities should reinforce the pluralistic society in which we live.
2. Classroom assignments should provide for both individual and cooperative efforts.
3. Students should have opportunities to explore their own culture as well as the cultures of others.

Satisfactory implementation of “Education that is Multicultural” will lead to the graduation of students who are aware of cultural similarities and differences and are capable of:

1. Living in harmony with people of different ethnic groups and cultures;
2. Working productively with and for people from different ethnic groups and cultures;
3. Solving local, national, and international problems by reviewing and analyzing information, then working cooperatively toward solutions.