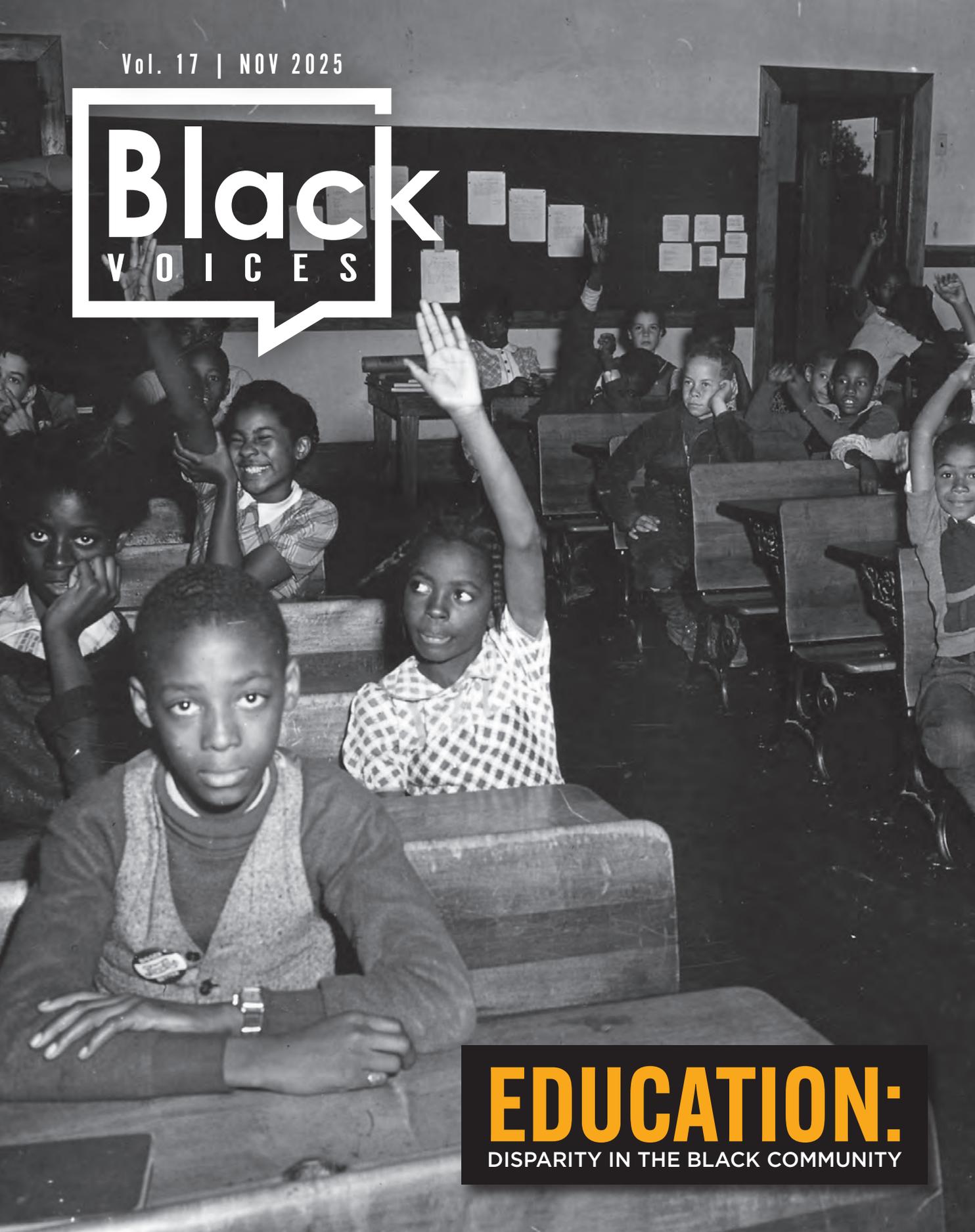


Vol. 17 | NOV 2025

# Black VOICES



**EDUCATION:**

DISPARITY IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY



**“The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worth while, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples.”**

**– CARTER G. WOODSON, PHD  
“THE MIS-EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO”, 1933**



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## From the Editor

# EDUCATION FOR BLACK STUDENTS

### **Empowerment Through Education**

Educational attainment has consistently been one of the most reliable pathways out of low-income status. It is a source of empowerment, equality, and opportunity, offering hope and optimism to those who have faced denial and have grown resigned or indifferent due to systemic barriers. The Anna Casey Foundation, in its report “Racial Inequality in Education,” highlights that education in the United States has historically been a mechanism for unequal treatment, access, and outcomes based on race and ethnicity.

### **Persistent Barriers to Access and Equity**

The ongoing struggle for full access to basic entitlements, such as education and voting, raises important questions. Why do these issues continue to be contentious among those who claim to support equality for all? Efforts to restrict access to quality education, higher learning, and even an honest recounting of our nation’s history persist. Disparities in disciplinary policies, opportunities for advanced placement, achievement gaps, and a lack of diverse faculty remain challenges within Delaware’s school system, resulting in an environment that appears inclusive yet is fundamentally unequal.

### **Implementation of Black History Curriculum**

Delaware took a significant legislative step with HB 198, which mandates the inclusion of Black History in school curricula. This law aims to ensure that all youth, future leaders, and citizens of Delaware receive an accurate and comprehensive understanding of American history. However, despite its enactment and Governor John Carney’s signature on June 17, 2021, HB 198 has yet to be fully implemented throughout the state.

### **Creating Welcoming School Environments**

Establishing supportive and inclusive school environments where Black children feel welcomed and accepted remains an ongoing challenge. In recent years, meetings with

school administrators in Sussex County have revealed instances where Black students experienced micro-aggressions from faculty and staff. The typical responses—temporary suspensions or school transfers—have not resulted in meaningful policy changes. We cannot continue to ignore the glaring incidences of inequality in our educational system. To quote Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, “...racial inequality will exist as long as it is ignored.”

### **Progress and Continuing Challenges**

While there has been progress, the question remains: Is it sufficient, and does it reflect a genuine commitment to providing the best educational systems for all children in Delaware? The state’s national educational ranking improved from 49th to 37th in the last school year, which is an encouraging sign. Nevertheless, this progress must be viewed in the context of Delaware’s past, including initial resistance to the mandates of the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision, which declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.

In Delaware’s most recent Kid’s count report the following information was given: The report indicates increases in school enrollment and increases in high school graduations. However, the report also shows that 55% of 3–4-year-old children as compared to 50% in 2019 are not in school. It also states that 4th grade reading levels and 8th grade math proficiency have plummeted and fewer high school students are graduating on time.

It is incumbent upon Delaware’s statewide educational system to continue to reform and make progress towards providing all children learning opportunities that support a more productive and financially secure future.

**CHARLOTTE KING**

Editor-in-Chief, Lewes, DE

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF



... Ending racism and its corrosive consequences

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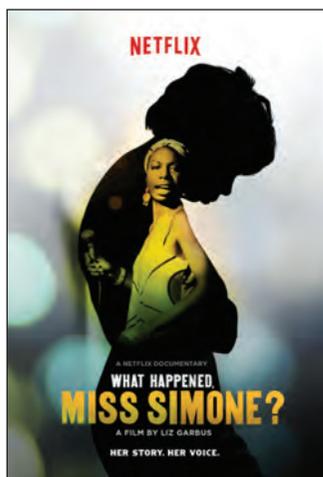


# UPCOMING EVENTS

## SDARJ Book & Film Discussions

Lewes Library: 111 Adams Ave, Lewes, DE 19958

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm



## November 25

### FILM:

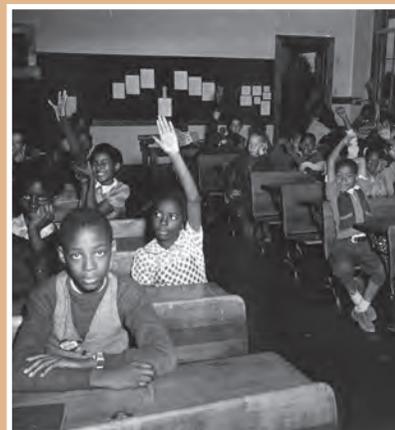
What Happened, Miss Simone?

### Supplemental reading:

I Put a Spell on You:  
The Autobiography of Nina Simone



## On the Cover



Irving Rusinow / Wikimedia Commons

Students attending  
Waldorf elementary school  
in Charles County, MD, 1941.



# Planting Opportunity: Closing the Achievement Gap by Confronting the Opportunity Gap

BY TRAVIS BOULDIN

When we talk about the education of Black students in America, the conversation often begins with the long shadow of systemic injustice: underfunded schools, segregated neighborhoods, and policies designed to exclude rather than uplift. These are real forces, deeply rooted in history, and they continue to shape the opportunities available to our young people today. But if the story ends there, we are left powerless, waiting for others to correct what has been broken. I believe our story deserves a different ending, one rooted in accountability, resilience, and the work we choose to do within our own communities.

As an educator and farmer, I have the privilege of teaching horticultural science to Black students in Washington, D.C. My classroom is not just desks and textbooks, but greenhouses, goats, chickens, and raised beds. Students are given the chance to see, touch, and grow. This type of education is rare in urban settings, yet it exposes an unsettling truth: many of our young people have never been given access to the most basic tools of labor, creativity, and care. I have had students who do not know how to hold a rake or push a shovel into the ground. Some have never picked up a watering can or pruned a plant. These moments remind us that while twenty first century skills such as digital literacy and

critical thinking are vital, we cannot overlook skills of trade that often appear outdated or forgotten. Food production will always be necessary, and teaching students how to produce, prepare, and sustain life through agriculture ensures that they gain both timeless and modern abilities.

This deficit is not a matter of intelligence. Our students are bright, capable, and imaginative. It is a deficit of opportunity. What many call an achievement gap is really an opportunity gap. In a society where digital devices are placed in children's hands earlier than ever, it is possible to be fluent in apps and shortcuts but unfamiliar with the tactile skills that build independence

and resilience. Career and Technical Education provides experiences that go far beyond working with soil or animals. These projects teach responsibility, patience, problem solving, and collaboration. They cultivate the soft skills that are just as critical in the workplace as they are in community settings or even in communicating effectively with family. When young people are denied these opportunities, they are robbed of the chance to build confidence in their ability to shape and sustain the world around them.

Yet here lies the turning point: acknowledging what is missing cannot be an invitation to despair. Instead, it should be a challenge to all of us, educators, parents, churches, and communities, to fill in the gaps. We cannot wait for policymakers or distant reformers to swoop in with perfect solutions. We must plant opportunity with our own hands.

In my classroom, that planting is literal. Black students are entrusted with living things: animals that need feeding,

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plants that need tending, soil that needs care. These experiences awaken something fundamental: the understanding that they have the power to create, to nurture, and to sustain. Watching a student who once shrugged off responsibility grow into someone who eagerly arrives early to check on goats or carefully waters crops is a reminder of what is possible when we trust young people with real tasks.

Travel plays a role as well. Through *Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences*, my students have seen a world larger than their blocks or schools. They have walked into rooms where Black youth are leaders in agriculture, environmental work, natural resources, and business. Exposure broadens vision, and once a vision expands, it is hard to shrink it back.

Of course, challenges remain. Some students resist. Some are skeptical. Some carry trauma that cannot be solved by a shovel or a greenhouse. But accountability matters. Our students must be reminded that while history has dealt them an uneven hand, they still bear the responsibility to play that hand with integrity, determination, and courage. We cannot allow oppression to become an excuse for mediocrity. Excellence

is not optional. It is survival, and it is also the measure of honoring those who fought for the very right to learn.

This dual message, that the world must change but that we must also change ourselves, is not easy to deliver. Yet I believe it is the only honest way forward. Yes, we demand equity in funding, fair treatment in policy, and inclusion in opportunity. But within our homes, our schools, and our communities, we must also cultivate discipline, curiosity, and resilience. We must encourage our students to put down their phones long enough to pick up a book, a tool, or a seed. We must remind them that their future does not only depend on what society gives, but on what they are willing to build.

Agriculture has taught me a truth I carry into every classroom: growth is both a gift and a responsibility. Seeds cannot plant themselves. Soil does not till itself. Harvest does not appear without sweat. In the same way, our students cannot thrive without us, their elders, mentors, and teachers, providing not just access but expectation.

The inequities Black students face are undeniable. But so too is the potential that lives within them. Our role is not only to protest what is broken, but to model what is possible. By placing tools in their hands, expos-

ing them to new worlds, and holding them accountable to their own greatness, we give them more than education. We give them agency. And agency is the first step toward liberation.

If there is one lesson I hope to leave with my students, it is this: you are not defined by what the world withholds, but by what you choose to cultivate.

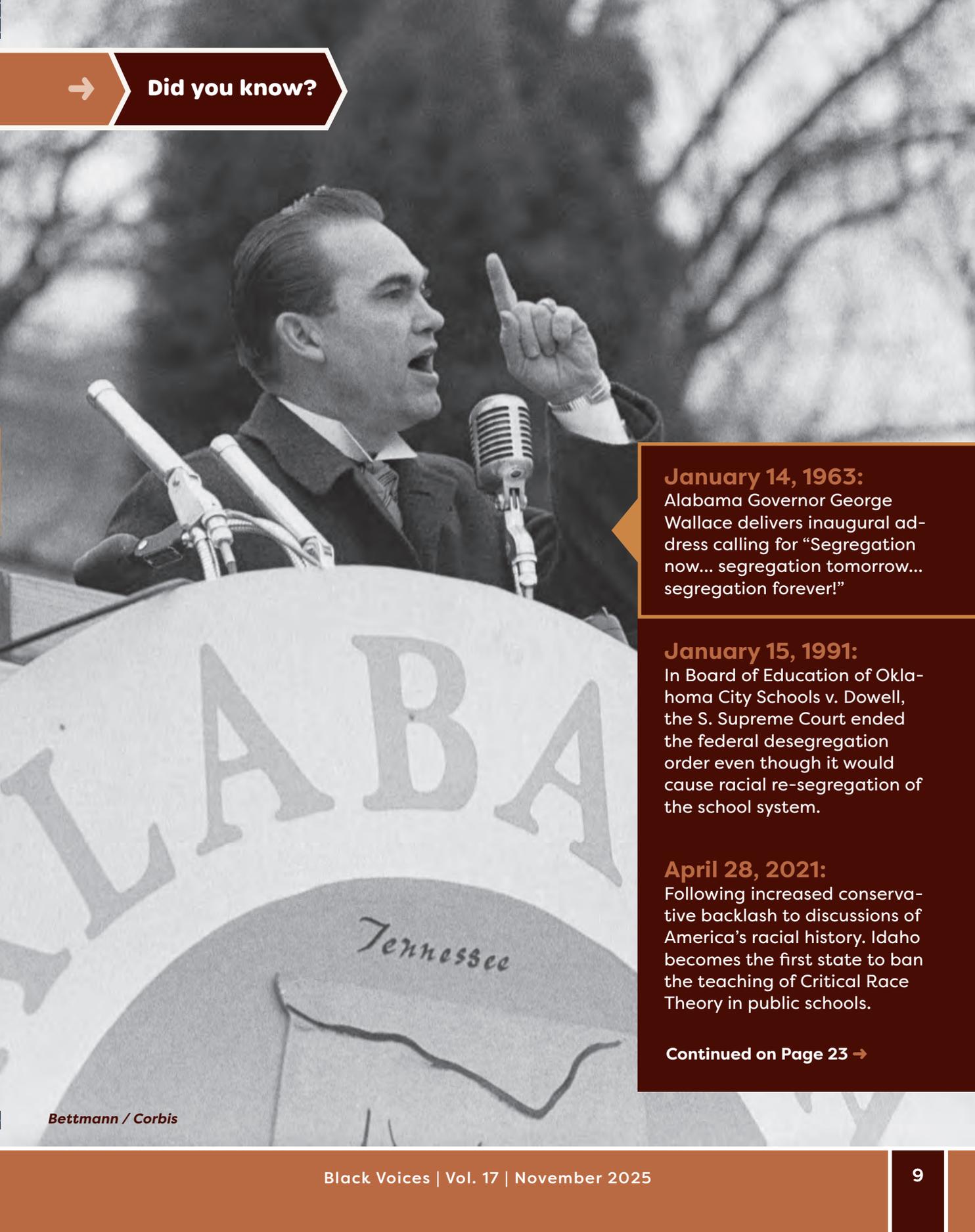


## TRAVIS BOULDIN

Bouldin is a horticulture science instructor and community farmer based in Washington, D.C. He leads programs that connect Black students to agriculture, animal care, and career pathways through hands-on education and national leadership experiences. His work focuses on closing opportunity gaps, strengthening communities, and preparing youth for the workforce.



## Did you know?



### **January 14, 1963:**

Alabama Governor George Wallace delivers inaugural address calling for “Segregation now... segregation tomorrow... segregation forever!”

### **January 15, 1991:**

In *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Schools v. Dowell*, the S. Supreme Court ended the federal desegregation order even though it would cause racial re-segregation of the school system.

### **April 28, 2021:**

Following increased conservative backlash to discussions of America’s racial history, Idaho becomes the first state to ban the teaching of Critical Race Theory in public schools.

**Continued on Page 23 →**

Bettmann / Corbis



# The Unquantifiable Impact of Minority Educators: Its immeasurable!

BY TRAUNNA YOUNG, 4TH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

*Although a minority educator's influence is frequently characterized as strong, it is immeasurable. Diversity in numbers is only one aspect of representation in education; other aspects include identity, visibility, access, belonging, and the transforming power of connection. Many students, particularly those of color, find that a single teacher who resembles them can change not only their academic path but also their life's course.*

## A Personal Encounter That Changed Everything

Growing up I saw adults of color, however; they were rarely in leadership or teaching positions. They were typically employed in cafeteria or custodial roles. Although their presence was significant, it wasn't until I met my first teacher of color in the eleventh grade that I realized what it meant to be taught by someone who reflected who I was, Mrs. Lisa Swan.

Mrs. Swan did not just teach me psychology—she saw me, understood me, and affirmed me.

That relationship is not an exception—it is the embodiment of what minority educators provide: not just instruction, but refuge, representation, mentorship, and belonging.

## Why Representation in Education Matters

Research continually reinforces what lived experiences have

shown for generations: students benefit in profound ways when they are taught by educators who reflect their culture, race, or background.

Minority teachers frequently understand the hidden difficulties and cultural differences that students encounter. They help students who might otherwise feel misunderstood gain trust. They can be observed fighting the fight to be champions for fairness in access, expectations, and discipline, while dismantling the culture of implicit bias in schools.

**Studies by the National Education Association and the Center for American Progress show that America's teaching force does not reflect the diversity of its student population. This underrepresentation has real consequences:**

- Underrepresentation: Teachers and administrators of color

comprise a small fraction of the workforce, even in districts with majority students of color.

- Student Outcomes: Students of color perform better academically and socially when they have teachers of the same race.
- Exposure Gaps: Many students of color go their entire K-12 journey without ever having a teacher who looks like them.

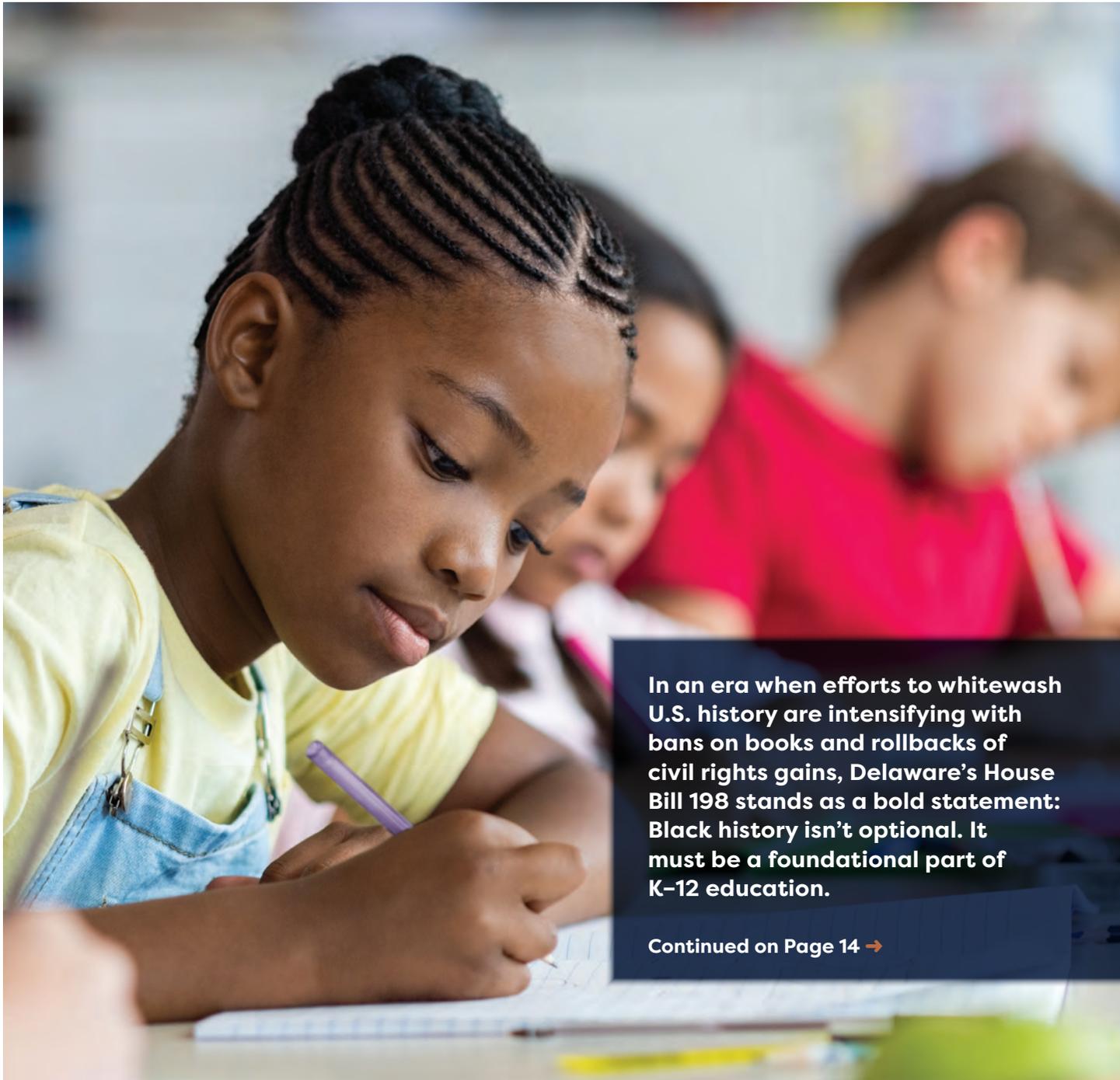
Research shows these impacts are not only academic, but deeply psychological. According to Ijoma in *Visions by WIMIN*, “You can only aspire to what you can see yourself in.” The presence of minority educators’ signals possibility, access, and belonging (2022).

Brannon (2024) describes representation in classrooms as offering both mirrors and windows. Mirrors allow students to see themselves reflected in positions of intelligence, leadership, and success. Windows provide students exposure to cultures, beliefs, and lived experiences that differ from their own—cultivating empathy and understanding.

**Continued on Page 13 →**

# Paper Law or Living Legacy? The Test of HB 198 in Delaware

SHANNON GRIFFIN, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS  
ROUTE 9 CDC – STUDENT ADVOCACY CENTER



In an era when efforts to whitewash U.S. history are intensifying with bans on books and rollbacks of civil rights gains, Delaware's House Bill 198 stands as a bold statement: Black history isn't optional. It must be a foundational part of K-12 education.

Continued on Page 14 →

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## The Impact on Student Success

Data underscores the importance of representation:

- Schools with minority principals tend to have higher percentages of minority teachers, improved student performance, and greater enrollment of Black students in gifted programs. This suggests that school-wide climate, expectation, and programming can shift under leadership of color (Anderson, 2025).
- Administrators of color frequently contribute viewpoints and priorities that are attentive to concerns about inclusion, racial equity, and culturally responsive practice. They can recognize and confront systemic injustices within their schools (Soda, 2023).
- A Johns Hopkins study (2017) found that Black students who had at least one Black teacher between third and fifth grade were 29% less likely to drop out of high school. For low-income Black boys, the dropout rate decreased by 39%.
- Gershenson (2022) found that having a same-race teacher increases the likelihood of high school graduation and college enrollment, with teacher expectations playing a critical role.
- Carver-Thomas (2018) notes that minority teachers bring

assets—cultural awareness, community connection, and lived experience—that benefit all students, including white students.

When students see teachers and administrators of color in positions of authority, it shifts what they believe is possible. As Salter (2019) states, minority leadership is empowering—it tells students, “There is a place for you here.”

Belonging is normalized through representation. Students unconsciously receive the message that leadership is for others, not for themselves, when they infrequently or never encounter others who resemble them in positions of authority. However, when pupils notice a coach, counselor, principal, or teacher who resembles them, they absorb the idea that they can achieve authority and success. Students are less alienated in academic settings. According to research, students are more inclined to seek higher education and leadership roles themselves.

### The Dual Benefit: For Students of All Backgrounds

While the impact on students of color is profound, these benefits are not limited by race. All students benefit from educators with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and approaches. Administrators of color, tend to make staff and students feel more comfortable voicing issues about racial bias, exclusion, or microaggressions. It's crucial to

have that voice and psychological stability. Exposure to minority educators prepares students to thrive in a multicultural world—socially, academically, and professionally.

### From Impact to Legacy

What I once needed, I now provide. The reassurance that I can accomplish and make an impact is what I see when I look and hear the words of my administrator, Dr. Equetta Jones. Together we build spaces not only for instruction, but spaces where students feel seen, heard, respected, and capable.

The work of diversifying the teaching profession is not a favor to minority students—it is an investment in the future of all students. Representation is not symbolic—it is transformational. The impact of even one minority educator can ripple across generations.

Minority educators and administrators address cultural, emotional, and academic demands in addition to personnel needs. Their presence contributes to the deconstruction of stereotypes, helps affirm identity, and create or establish a secure, and encouraging learning setting. Education becomes more relatable and made more inclusive when students observe teachers that represent a variety of ethnicities, languages, and life experiences.

*Ask me how I know,  
I am living proof.*

Continued from Page 12 →

Signed into law on June 17, 2021, HB 198 mandates that Delaware public school districts and charter schools develop and implement curricula integrating Black History for every grade from kindergarten through 12th grade.

The law took effect in the 2022-2023 school year and set tight administrative benchmarks, such as districts required to appoint a designated HB 198 lead and publish annual implementation reports. Unfortunately, there remains a troubling gap in accountability. Districts have broad discretion to create or choose their own curriculum, and there's no enforcement timeline or fidelity check to ensure consistency across the state.

A review of the Department of Education's 2024-2025 "Black History Education" report shows that virtually every district submitted a report. However, that submission alone doesn't guarantee depth or fidelity—nor does it show that most districts have meaningfully begun teaching a robust, consistent Black History curriculum. There's little publicly available evidence that many districts have taken significant strides beyond simply acknowledging the requirement.

Delaware's local-control model means the Department of Education provides guidance and model lesson plans but cannot impose a uniform

curriculum. This autonomy opens the door for disparities in how or even whether Black History is taught. It begs the question: When will students in every Delaware school receive a truthful, meaningful education about Black contributions, struggles, and resilience?

Right now, Delaware stands at a pivotal moment. Laws requiring truth in education risk becoming empty mandates without clear expectations and enforcement. As legislative battles over book bans and civil rights swirl across the country, Delaware has the chance to demonstrate true leadership: not just in passing a progressive law, but in ensuring it's enacted effectively, comprehensively, and uniformly.

**What must happen next:**

**1. School districts must publish their detailed implementation plans—curricular outlines, grade-level pacing, primary sources used, professional development schedules, and named point-people for HB 198.**

**2. Districts should hold staff accountable through measurable goals and timelines, ensuring fidelity to HB 198's requirements—not just compliance in name.**

**3. Parents, educators, community groups, and activists must insist on transparency: are principals and school boards asking, "What are our**

**students learning? How are we teaching Black History year-round?"**

**4. State leaders and the Department of Education should monitor disparities and step in where local capacity falls short, offering resources and, if necessary, tightening regulations.**

You have the power to make it happen! Contact your local school board and district leadership today. Ask two essential questions:

Has a comprehensive, grade-level Black History curriculum been developed and implemented in our schools?

Where can I view our implementation plan—our timeline, program details, and accountability measures?

Demand clarity. Demand transparency. Demand that Black history is not an afterthought—but an enduring, integral part of every Delaware student's education.

In an age when historical truth is under siege, HB 198 must be more than a law. Let it be a tool for justice, knowledge, and empowerment. Write to your board. Call your superintendent. Go to the next meeting.

**Because defending our past is vital to shaping a just and democratic future—for Delaware and for America.**



**“We have a wonderful history behind us...  
If you are unable to demonstrate to  
the world that you have this record,  
the world will say to you, ‘You are not  
worthy to enjoy the blessings of  
democracy or anything else.’”**

**— CARTER G. WOODSON, PHD**



## Freedom Schools

In 2021, the First State Community Action Agency (FSCAA) launched Freedom Schools in Sussex County, supported by an \$80,000 grant from the United Way of Delaware through its Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative. Since then, the agency has expanded its Freedom School services and currently operates three locations, two in Sussex County and one in Kent County. Delaware currently has seven active Freedom School program sites, working in collaboration with local partners.

First State offers Freedom School as both summer and after-school programs. The summer reading program teaches the mechanics of reading, fosters a love of reading, and sparks the excitement of learning. Both programs are

short-term, culturally relevant initiatives that connect literacy, leadership development, family engagement, nutrition/health supports, and civic/social-action learning. This model, supported by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), emphasizes increasing motivation for reading and achievement, building confidence and leadership, and connecting families with community resources. It is also a servant-leadership incubator for college students and recent graduates who are interested in serving and making a difference.

In 1964, civil rights organizers launched Freedom Schools. The CDF created and now operates the modern CDF Freedom Schools program. The Children's Defense Fund initiated its national Freedom Schools

program in the 1990s and has been operating the model nationally since then. CDF currently manages, promotes, trains, and partners with local organizations to run the CDF Freedom Schools model nationwide. CDF provides curriculum, training, evaluation support, and a national sitemap for local partners.

Delaware's CDF Freedom Schools have succeeded in combating summer learning loss, enhancing literacy, and fostering positive attitudes toward learning. They empower students, particularly those from underserved communities, by offering culturally relevant education and fostering community engagement. The success of Freedom Schools in Delaware has led to their expansion, with programs

in seven locations, serving a growing number of students each year. The collaborative efforts of local organizations, school districts, and community leaders are key to sustaining and scaling this initiative.

CDF Freedom Schools support children academically, socially, and emotionally, while empowering families with resources, engagement, and ongoing support. They are holistic enrichment programs that create lasting benefits for children, families, and the community.

**For example:**

• **Family Engagement:**

Freedom Schools include parent workshops, family literacy events, and community activities, helping families support their children's learning at home.

- **Access to Resources:** Freedom Schools connect families to community resources such as health services, tutoring programs, and social support networks.

- **Peace of Mind:** During the summer, Freedom Schools offer safe, structured programs that are enriching and educational.

Freedom Schools' after-school programs offer a range of services and resources, focusing on academic support, personal development, and community engagement for youth aged 5 to 18. They provide a safe environment for students and

engage youth in constructive activities, deterring them from negative influences and fostering a sense of community.

After-school and summer programs serve as vital extensions of regular school offerings, providing academic support, fostering personal growth, and engaging families to create a holistic educational experience for students while helping them succeed in school, improve behavior and attendance, and promote overall well-being.

**Parents' involvement strengthens the after-school programs by:**

- Reinforcing academic learning at home
- Supporting social and emotional growth
- Building effective communication with staff
- Participating in program events and community activities.

Active and consistent parent participation enhances children's overall experience, maximizes learning gains, and helps the program succeed.

Delaware's afterschool and Freedom School programs receive funding from a combination of corporate, nonprofit, private, and community contributions (United Way, Discover, Bank of America, Cape Henlopen District, private funds, and fundraisers). First

State Community Action administers the programs locally, ensuring alignment with educational goals and community needs, while CDF provides the Freedom School model and guidance.

The community can contribute to preparing youth academically, socially, and emotionally by supporting Freedom Schools, promoting health, civic responsibility, and lifelong learning. The First State Community Action Agency welcomes hands-on (volunteering), financial, and partnership support that can enhance the program's reach and effectiveness. Together with FSCAA, community involvement ensures that Freedom Schools thrive and provide lasting benefits to children and families.

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Executive Director:  
First State Community Action Agency, Inc.  
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**First State Community Action Agency:**



[firststatecaa.org/etss](https://firststatecaa.org/etss)



## My Reflections on HBCUs

For a long time, education for Black people in America was segregated and unequal, despite the Supreme Court's Doctrine of Separate but Equal. In reality, students of color gained a less-than-equal education or opportunity when it came to the needed funding and resources for an equal education.

What's more, segregation and the lack of funding fueled and reinforced school systems of inequities. For example, for a long time, the only places where students of color in the state of Delaware could obtain a high school diploma were Howard High School in Wilmington, Delaware, and

Delaware State College in Dover, Delaware.

Delaware State College for Students of Color was established in May 1891 as a result of state and elected officials working to maintain a separate system of education for individuals living within their jurisdiction.



*Smallbones / Wikimedia Commons*

When I think of what the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have meant to America, frankly it is unmeasurable. Specifically, when it comes to my family, I cannot help but refer to my uncle Carl Collick. My uncle attended grades nine and ten at Howard High. Then he completed high school in Dover at what was then Delaware State College for Colored students, which had been established by

the Delaware General Assembly under the provisions of the Morrill Act in 1890.

Upon entering college, my uncle took Math 101 and 102 under the direction of Dr. George Seidel, a former chemist from the DuPont Company. He said to my uncle, “Mr. Collick, you can do math; you should be a chemist.” Before leaving Lewes, my grandmother gave him two pieces of advice. She told him that he would have to do his best every day, as she could not accompany him, and he should listen to the grown-ups.

After completing his college degree, he married, moved to Philadelphia, and began working in the city water department. After two years, he received a call from Dr. Seidel, whose recommendation had landed him in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, working on the jet fuels project. He worked on the project for 35 years, becoming a supervisor in the last decade of his career.

As a result of those mentioned above, my uncle served as a pillar and example to the next generations of our family on the value of seeking higher education. We looked to live the American dream of building and living in a culture of opportunity, equality, achievement, and inclusion, with liberty and justice for all!

Former State of Delaware Governor Tom Carper was a true champion for Delaware State College. During Governor Carper’s two terms, he would lead and connect with the State of Delaware Legislators to appropriate 100 million dollars for much-needed upgrades to the Delaware State College’s infrastructure and deferred maintenance.

When I asked Governor Carper why the \$ 100 million amount in appropriations, he said it was because of his conscience, based on what he considered right and wrong. As I look at the current plight of HBCUs in our country, I can only hope that America’s HBCUs will cross paths with individuals and leaders who foster the ideology of former Delaware Governor Tom Carper. I also want to mention that Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester, Senator Chris Coons, Representative Sarah McBride, and many others who have and currently support the funding of Delaware State which is now University.

The HBCUs of today still face ongoing mountains to climb, and these mountains are due in part to years of not being properly funded. Therefore, their most significant climb today still centers around inadequate federal and local (state) funding support. Also,

**Continued on Page 20 →**

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the cultural systemic wealth gap that has been woven into our American fabric will always present a system of challenge for students of color, as the cost of higher education continues to rise.

Just as Delaware State does today, many HBCUs have lower endowments and thus are more dependent on the yearly tuition students pay. In fact, the wealth gap, as well as the lower endowment at Delaware State University, impacts the school's ability to help students with scholarship needs. Compared to schools with large endowments, which are better equipped to help students who do not have sufficient funding to pay full tuition and fees. Simply speaking, limited funding also impacts a wide range of higher education needs, including faculty and staff retention, infrastructure, and the services provided to students (such as facilities, safety, and housing). In fact, the long-standing issue of deferred maintenance at Delaware State University and so many other HBCUs has always impacted classroom space for in-person classes on main campuses, which will impede faculty growth and thus the ability to serve all students to the fullest.

As I mentioned earlier, we are

increasingly encountering politicians and so-called leaders who are misinformed. There seems to be a limited understanding or awareness of the fact that diversity, equity, and inclusion not only open opportunities in life for those who have been systemically denied but it will also ultimately help them take their rightful place in America.

When I think of the above, I cannot help but think of my former elementary and junior high principal, Mr. Fred Thomas, for whom Cape Henlopen School District's newest Middle School was named. He succeeded in the Smith-Barney way, characterized by hard work and credibility. He was included and earned it by demonstrating that he was one of the best during his tenure in the district and the state of Delaware. His accolades were a result of his hard work and the credibility he had earned within his community.

I am grateful for my connections with Delaware State University, beginning with my uncle, my service tenure of approximately 20 years, my son attending the college lab school, and my present service on the Board of Trustees. As someone who has come full circle, what do I see as the true significance of the historically Black Colleges and Universities

in our country? The HBCUs in America have been a place of providing unparalleled benefits, inspiring the future through a village support system of belonging and community, while fostering upward mobility to forge a better place for each of us to gain an opportunity to realize the American dream.

In fact, according to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, HBCUs have accounted for 40 percent of African American members of Congress, 40 percent of Black engineers, 50 percent of Black lawyers, and 80 percent of Black judges. Not to mention the only Black vice president of the U.S.

I am truly encouraged by Delaware State University, which has opened a new Child Lab Center and Agriculture Building, thanks to federal, state, and private donations. The state of Delaware continues to increase its appropriations for the funding of the University, including a recent 20-million-dollar award for the construction of a new athletics field house. Nationally, I am thankful for philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, who continues to donate millions of dollars for the funding of HBCUs.

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**William "Bill" Collick**

Retired educator and coach, Board member of Delaware State University and Cape Henlopen School District.

# The Little Rock Nine



*Francis Miller / LIFE Picture Collection / Shutterstock*

In 1957, the Little Rock Nine—a group of nine African American students—became national symbols of the civil rights movement when they enrolled at the previously all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Their enrollment came three years after the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared school segregation unconstitutional. Despite this ruling, the students faced intense resistance, including threats and violent mobs, as they attempted to integrate the school.

The crisis escalated when Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered the National Guard to block the students' entry. In response, President Dwight D. Eisenhower intervened by sending federal troops to escort and protect the students, asserting federal authority over state resistance. The bravery of the Little Rock Nine highlighted the challenges of desegregation and played a crucial role in advancing the civil rights movement, marking a pivotal moment in the struggle for racial equality in American education.



**“Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better.”**

**– CARTER G. WOODSON, PHD  
“THE MIS-EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO”, 1933**



## Did you know?



Harry Harris / Associated Press

Continued from Page 9 →

### September 24, 1964:

A crowd of at least 7,500 demonstrators marched to protest increased racial integration in New York City public schools.

### November 2, 2004:

Alabama voters reject a constitutional amendment that would remove from the state constitution a provision requiring separate schools for “white and colored children.”

### November 24, 1958:

The U. S. Supreme Court upholds Alabama school placement law that maintains racially segregated schools despite *Brown v. Board* ruling that segregated public schools are unconstitutional.

*(Permission granted from the Equal Justice Initiative-2021 calendar: submitted by Rev. Marjorie Belmont)*

# RCSC Corner: Reform Legislation Passed

SDARJ's Returning Citizens Support Committee and its Advocacy Committee were busy during the past session of the Delaware legislature. Two bills addressing probation reform (SB7) and compassionate release (SB10) were supported, passed, and signed into law.

**Governor Matt Meyer signed the probation reform bill (Senate Bill 7) on July 1, 2025 and it will become effective December 28, 2025.**

After completing a court-ordered prison sentence, the legislation seeks to reduce recidivism by creating a fairer and more flexible probation system for the more than 10,000 people under state supervision.

When people return to society, "It is often the start of a lengthy maze of complicated hurdles and inflexible rules that many people find impossible to navigate," said Senator Marie Pinkney, chair of the Senate Corrections and Public Safety Committee and one of the legislation's sponsors. "Many times, people on probation are unjustly returned to incarceration for minor rules' violations or petty infractions rather than committing new crimes. With this bill, excessive fines will no longer be used as a tool of

retribution. Probation officers will have greater flexibility to use their judgment and offer second chances for people facing circumstances beyond their control. For instance, they may hold check-in meetings virtually, via telephone, or in-person and accommodate the work schedule of those on probation. The bill eliminates the requirement for anyone on probation to get permission from a court officer to marry."

**The governor signed the Compassionate Release bill (Senate Bill 10) on July 14, and it will become effective January 10, 2026.**

The bill requires the Department of Correction to annually review individuals incarcerated for more than one year to determine their eligibility for a reduced sentence for good behavior, to notify the individual of the review result(s), and to provide the reason(s) for any recommendations not to modify their sentence. Applications for sentence modifications will go directly to the sentencing court rather than to the Board of Parole. January 12, 2025 is the first day the courts will accept applications for sentence modification under the new law.

**The bill allows for early release for people with**

**lengthy sentences as an act of compassion. Some circumstances are:**

**The incarcerated person –**

- **Has a serious medical illness or infirmity.**
- **Is 60 years of age or older, has served at least 15 years of their original sentence, and has been rehabilitated.**
- **Has served at least 25 years of the original sentence and has been rehabilitated.**

Applying for compassionate release is not automatic. The Department of Corrections and the sentencing court must consider whether releasing an individual would pose a substantial risk to a victim or witness to the original offense, and the sentencing court must provide victims an opportunity to be heard.

Compassionate release and probation reform were two of the issues addressed in Black Voices of May 2025. This is a good start, but we have a long way to go toward making Delaware a place where people make a mistake, experience rehabilitation, and return as productive members of our communities.

## Deaths in DOC Custody

Date	Facility	Name	Age	Charge(s)
2-17	James T. Vaughan Correctional Center	Michael Feliciano	62	<b>DOC custody since 1988</b> and was serving a Life sentence for 2nd Degree Unlawful Sexual Intercourse.
4-8	Sussex Correctional Institution	Bryan Moore	63	<b>DOC custody since 3-3-2025</b> Pre-trial detainer – Strangulation, Assault, Breach of Conditions.
6-10	Howard R. Young Correctional Institution	Carl Parrish	35	<b>DOC custody since 6-9-2025</b> Violation of Probation hearing for a Shoplifting conviction.
6-26	SCI	Jason Corkell	40	<b>DOC custody since 6-25-2025</b> Violation of Probation hearing for a Shoplifting conviction.
7-1	SCI	Ronald Morrell	43	<b>DOC custody since 6-30-25</b> Held in lieu of \$6,500 bail on Failure to Appear Capias' for charges of Selling Stolen Property, Shoplifting, and Conspiracy.
7-7	SCI	Frederick Harris	67	<b>DOC custody since 2-2025</b> 18-month prison sentence for 5th Offense Driving Under the Influence.



## Death Penalty Constitutional Amendment

**In September, 2024, Delaware officially repealed its death penalty effectively removing it from the state’s statutes. Because the state’s Constitution still permits the possibility of capital punishment, an amendment is necessary to ensure it is permanently unconstitutional and cannot be reinstated. In a related development in 2024, the state legislature also fully repealed the existing death penalty law, making a constitutional amendment the next step in the permanent aboli-**

**tion process. The amendment would add capital punishment to Article I, Section 11 of the Delaware Constitution making it a prohibited penalty.**

Amendments to Delaware’s constitution requires a two-step legislative process. In June 2025, the first leg of an amendment was passed adding capital punishment to the list of prohibited penalties in the state Constitution. The House of Representatives passed House Substitute 1 for House Bill 35 (HS 1 for HB 35)

followed by the Senate’s approval, completing the first leg.

In the second leg, the same amendment language must be passed by both legislative chambers again in the next General Assembly to become part of the state Constitution.

The amendment addresses Delaware’s long and dysfunctional history with the death penalty which has been abolished and reinstated multiple times over the past 70 years.



**“If you teach the Negro that he has accomplished as much good as any other race he will aspire to equality and justice without regard to race. Such an effort would upset the program of the oppressor in Africa and America. Let him learn to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, and the Teuton. Lead the Negro to detest the man of African blood-to hate himself. The oppressor then may conquer, exploit, oppress and even annihilate the Negro by segregation without fear or trembling. With the truth hidden there will be little expression of thought to the contrary.”**

**– CARTER G. WOODSON, PHD  
“THE MIS-EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO”, 1933**



# LET'S STOP RACISM FOR GOOD

IN SOUTHERN DELAWARE

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