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The Life of a Policy: An Afrocentric Case Study Policy Analysis of Florida Statute 1003.42(h)

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, THE LIFE OF A POLICY: AN AFROCENTRIC CASE STUDY POLICY ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA STATUTE 1003.42(H), by CHIKE AKUA, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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ABSTRACT

THE LIFE OF A POLICY:
AN AFROCENTRIC CASE STUDY POLICY ANALYSIS OF
FLORIDA STATUTE 1003.42(H)

Under the direction of Joyce. E. King, Ph.D.

By
Chike Akua

The purpose of this study is to examine how members of the community, educators, legislators, and members of the academy organized and mobilized to bring Florida Statute 1003.42(h) into being. This Afrocentric case study policy analysis centers African people, educators, and policymakers as agents, actors, and subjects with agency who determined that such legislation was needed and necessary for the education of African American students and all students. Data, in the form of document analysis, websites in the states of New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and South Carolina with similar laws, and Florida's Commissioner's Task Force on African American History, newspaper accounts, and interviews with key people involved in the creation of the Florida legislation, were analyzed using an Africological methodology. Findings include several major themes that emerged about educational curriculum content, intent, needs, and analysis relative to why this legislation was sponsored and passed including: (a) inaccuracy and omission, (b) correction and inclusion, (c) consciousness and competence, (d) policy and priority, (e) power and precedence. The final product includes a theory of Selective Memory Manipulation and a Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy Production and Analysis.

THE LIFE OF A POLICY:
AN AFROCENTRIC CASE STUDY POLICY ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA STATUTE 1003.42(H)

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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I begin, as is customary in many African traditions, by giving honor to the Most High, who is known by many names and worshipped in many ways, the One Source and the One Force through which we all live move and have our being. I also give honor to my Ancestors because there is an African proverb which states, "If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of our Ancestors." As Jedi Shemsu Jehewty (Dr. Jacob Carruthers) has stated, "Our stride is wide because we are walking in the footsteps of giants." Indeed we have drunk from wells we did not dig and warmed ourselves by fires we did not build.

This work is more than an intellectual exercise. It is an Ancestral obligation intended to reconnect the ancient African tradition of educational excellence, which is thousands of years old, to the African American quest for educational excellence. Several Ancestors who are Seba/Jegna (Master Teachers) whose work has directly influenced my work are Nana Baffour Amankwatia II (Asa G. Hilliard III), Edward Robinson, Nana John Henrik Clarke, Ivan Van Sertima, W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Dja Ptahhotep, and Imhotep. I am thankful for your guidance in this process. It is my intent to carry on the rich tradition of African scientific and educational excellence and share it in the community and the academy as many of the aforementioned scholars have done in the best tradition of the Ancestors. I will continue what you have begun.

I am especially thankful to my partner in love, life, and liberation, my wife, Willette E. Akua, for joining me on this journey, and to my suns, Jahbari J. Akua and Amari E. Akua. It is my family who, with love, joy, and laughter, inspires me to greater character, consciousness, and commitment. To my parents, Joseph and Faye Fenwick, I am thankful for the living example of loving, supportive, and visionary parents with strong values. I am thankful for my sister, Leslie

Fenwick, and my brothers, Russell, John, and Jason, who at various times have been lights and guides in times of trial, tribulation, triumph, and victory.

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Special thanks to Dr. Molefi Asante, certainly a man of Imhotepic productivity, who graciously provided clarity and insights about his theory of Afrocentricity and how it applies to education and policy.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. James C. Young and Dr. Itihari Toure, who recognized something in me many years ago and whose thoughtful guidance led me to The Jegna Collective, an African educators think tank convened by Dr. Asa Hilliard, into which I was initiated. That experience has greatly shaped my development as an educator, scholar, and spiritual being.

This dissertation is a Divine Ancestral offering for the resurrection of African people and the redemption of humanity. As the ancient Kemetic *Prt Em Hru* (*The Book of Coming Forth by Day*) declares, "I have come here to speak the truth and set the Scales of Justice in their proper place among those who have no voice."

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GLOSSARY

In order to clarify how specific words and concepts are used in this study, the list below provides definitions and citations from the scholars who defined them.

1. **African-Centered Education (ACE):** a process of centering students in the best of African culture to examine information, meet needs and solve problems in African communities; often used interchangeably with Afrocentric education.

   African-Centered Education (ACE) Movement: an intentional, self-directed and self-determined effort to build, define, develop, and defend independent Black institutions while also carving and creating sacred cultural spaces in public schools and school systems. This movement began in 1968 with the founding of Ujamaa Schule in Washington DC (http://ujamaaschool.com/) by Dr. El Senzengakulu Zulu and later, Uhuru Sasa in Brooklyn, NY. The Movement continues to this day.

2. **African Cultural Inquiry:** asking critical questions to facilitate effective critique and increase consciousness of issues affecting African people (Akua, 2012, p. 81).

3. **Afrocentricity:** a metatheory and a theoretical concept operationalized by Molefi Kete Asante that places "African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (Asante, 1998, p. 2). "Afrocentricity is not data, but the orientation to data. It is how we approach phenomena" (Asante, 2007, p. 49). While it is not data, it can and does inform what data to gather and how it will be interpreted. The term Afrocentric and African-centered are often used interchangeably.

4. **Afrocentrism:** not to be confused with Afrocentricity, "*Afrocentrism* was first used by the opponents of Afrocentricity who in their zeal saw it as the obverse of Eurocentrism – the use of *Afrocentrism* reflected a negation of the idea of Afrocentricity as a positive and

progressive paradigm" (Asante, 2007, p. 17). "Only those who are anti-Afrocentricity define the idea as *Afrocentrism*" (Asante, 2007, p. 23).

5. **Africology**: "the Afrocentric examination of phenomena related to African people" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 59).
6. **Afronography:** a method of recording and writing the African experience from an Afrocentric perspective (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75) as distinct from ethnography. While ethnography was developed as a Eurocentric way of acquiring information about people other than Europeans, Afronography is a method of gaining access to information about Africans from the standpoint of African culture itself" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 76).
7. **Baseline Essays:** The concept of the Baseline Essays was introduced by Dr. Asa G. Hilliard III consultant to the Portland School District's desegregation plan, in 1982. The term when used by Portland Public Schools means a series of essays that gives information about the history, culture and contributions of a specific geocultural group in the areas of art, language arts, mathematics, science, social science, and music. The purpose of the essays is to provide the reader with a holistic and thematic history of the culture and contributions of a specific geocultural group from ancient times to the present. This will enable the reader to get a better understanding of the group's world view – axiology (values) and epistemology (ways of knowing)" (http://www.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/mc-me/essays-1.php).
8. **Black Nationalism:** a philosophy and practice of organizing Black people for nationhood, sovereignty, and all of the attendant responsibilities inherent therein.

9. **Centered:** the place of cultural authenticity from which we view the world; to be situated in the best of one's culture and cultural perspective; placing African ideas and ideals at the center of any analysis of phenomena that affects African people. "Discovering centeredness is itself the primary task of the Afrocentric researcher" (Asante, 2007, p. 52).
10. **Centricity:** "the process of locating a student within the context of his or her own cultural reference in order to be able to relate to other cultural perspectives. Thus, this applies to students from any culture" (Asante, 2007, p. 79).
11. **CIBI:** Council of Independent Black Institutions; "an umbrella organization of Independent African-centered educational institutions, established in 1972" (Konadu, 2009, p. 65).
12. **Cultural Knowledge:** knowledge gained about the cultural legacies and patterns in cultures other than one's own (King & Swartz, 2016, p. 4).
13. **Cultural Mismatch**: an incongruent, hegemonic arrangement in which uninformed, dysconscious Whites teach other people's children using decentering curriculum and pedagogy.
14. **De-Centered:** to be taken to a location that is away from the vantage point of cultural authenticity; to be taken off one's own terms, psychologically, culturally, historically or personally and thus lack agency. This state of being is a result of oppression in the form of miseducation, colonialism, etc.
15. **Democratized Knowledge:** "coalesced knowledge that reconnects or 're-members' the multiple and shared knowledge bases and experiences that shaped the past" with equal representation of perspectives (King & Swartz, 2014, p. 6).

16. **Dis-located:** An epistemological place and perspective that is alien to African cultural ideals. "An oppressed person is dis-located when she operates from a standpoint…that is centered in the experiences of the oppressor" (Asante, 2007, p. 42).
17. **Double Consciousness:** the concept of being caught between two cultures, one indigenous to oneself (African) and the other an oppressive force (American/European). First described by DuBois (1903) in *The Souls of Black Folk*.
18. **Dysconscious Racism:** an uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as a given; a cognitive impairment resulting from miseducation; a theoretical concept developed by Joyce King characterized by unexamined assumptions, unasked questions, and unquestioned cultural myths regarding the social order and one's potential agency and moral responsibility (King, 1991).
19. **Djed:** in ancient Kemet (Egypt), a pillar; as an Afrocentric concept, it represents a strong place to stand, philosophically and or epistemologically.
20. **Eurocentrism:** a perspective that focuses on the image and interests of Europeans and omitting the perspectives of others for the purpose of gaining and maintaining global domination while masquerading as universal (Asante, 2007; Shockley, 2008). "Eurocentricity has become over the centuries an imposition of a particular human experience as if that particularity is universal" (Asante, 2007, p. 59).
21. **Eureason:** "the entire body of logic/reasoning that drives the European interpretation of reality into others' minds" (Baruti, 2006, p. 13).
22. **Heritage Knowledge:** group memory; "a repository or heritable legacy that makes a feeling of belonging to one's people possible" (King & Swartz, 2016, p. 4).

23. **IBI:** Independent Black Institution; an independently founded and financed Black institution based in Black philosophy that serves the interests of Black people.
24. **Inclusion:** "a principle which refers to including all cultures and groups as the subjects of their own accounts, not as objects of others' accounts about them" (King & Swartz, 2016, p. 16).
25. **Kawaida:** "a communitarian African philosophy created in the context of the African American liberation struggle and developed as an ongoing synthesis of the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world" (Karenga, 2008, p. 1).
26. **Kemet:** The original name of what today is called Egypt. Kemet means, "Black nation" in the *medu netcher* language (hieroglyphics).
27. **Kwanzaa:** An African American holiday based on family, community, and culture, created by Maulana Karenga and celebrated from December 26-Junauary 1. The original Swahili word *kwanza* means "first fruits;" Kwanzaa, as a celebration, is modeled after traditional African harvest celebrations (Karenga, 1999).
28. **Location:** "the use of the term *location* in the Afrocentric sense refers to the psychological, cultural, historical or personal place occupied by a person at a given time in history" (Asante, 2007, p. 42, emphasis in the original). Asante argues that a person or a people's location is either centered (in the best or most authentic expression of their culture with agency) or de-centered (taken off of their own cultural terms). "All issues are richly endowed with location…each definer and classifier is making a statement of place" (Asante, 2007, p. 60).
29. **Maafa:** a Swahili term meaning "calamity, catastrophe;" coined by Marimba Ani in reference to the catastrophic interruption of African civilization and sovereignty by way

of systematic European terrorism toward Africans with human trafficking, rape, kidnapping, torture, and hegemony (Ani, 1980; Ani, 1994). Ani coined the term as a corrective alternative to the use of the term slavery, which further depersonalizes and dehumanizes those involved in the process. Use of the term slavery connotes that this system of chattelization has been abolished and is no longer practiced. Maafa is also used to clarify the fact that this calamity and catastrophe is still going on and has shape-shifted in various forms and expressions of oppression.

30. **Ma'at:** "an ancient [Kemetic] Egyptian spiritual and ethical concept with multiple meanings" (Karenga in Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 315) including truth, justice, righteousness, reciprocity, balance, order, and harmony. It is the quintessential moral ideal, which guided and guarded the ways of the ancient Kemites (Karenga, 2004). As such, its principles serve as a guide for African-centered Education today.
31. **Mis-education:** the process of cultural hegemony and indoctrination into European ideas and ideals as superior and universal to African ideas and ideals; this concept was theorized in Woodson's now 1933 classic, *The Mis-education of the Negro*. Woodson's work foreshadowed Asante's *Afrocentricity* (1980).
32. **Multicultural Education:** an idea, educational reform movement, policy, set of practices, and a process whereby all cultural groups have access to education and proper representation in curricula.
33. **Nguzo Saba:** Swahili words, which mean, "seven principles" referring to the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa (*umoja*-unity; *kujichagulia*-self-determination; *ujima*-collective work and responsibility; *ujamaa*-cooperative economics; *nia*-purpose; *kuumba*-creativity; *imani*-faith) (http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml).

34. **Nija:** the Afrocentric ideology of victorious thought (Asante, 1988).
35. **Pan-Africanism:** "a philosophy and practice which affirms the common history, culture, interests and struggle of African people" (Karenga, 1999, p. 15) wherever they are in the world.
36. **Re-membering:** "a process…of historical recovery that reconnects the multiple and shared knowledge bases and experiences that shaped the past" (King & Swartz, 2014, p. 3). It is a necessary step in centering various cultural groups in the education process because the history of Africans and many others has been dismembered through miseducation.
37. **Sankofa:** a West African principle of cultural and historical recovery in the Twi language meaning "return and retrieve it" (Karenga, 1999).
38. **Schooling:** a transmission process imposing information in schools for the purpose of reproducing current power relations (Shujaa, 1994).
39. **Seba:** an ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) term with multiple meanings including teach, door and star; it is the oldest word in human history relative to teaching and learning and leads to the African philosophy of education that "the teacher opens the door to the universe so that the student may shine like a star" (Akua, 2012; Obenga, 2004). The term first appears in history "on the tomb of Antef II in 2052 BC where the scribes write about how the wise rises in the morning and reflects and how he goes about his way" (Asante in Asante & Ledbetter, 2016, p. 7)
40. **Seruj-ta:** an ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) concept meaning "restoration" (Karenga, 1999).

CHAPTER ONE: CULTURAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The early 1990s was a period in which conversations about Afrocentricity and multiculturalism increased and intensified. As an outgrowth of the Black Student Movement of the late 1960s and the subsequent African-Centered Education (ACE) Movement, African Americans challenged the content and intent of the standard American public school curriculum. Scholars like Asa Hilliard, Adelaide Sanford, Molefi Asante, and Barbara Sizemore questioned the American national narrative and curriculum canon (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart, & Williams, 1990; Hilliard, 1995). Scholars like Diane Ravitch, Arthur Schlesinger, Mary Lefkowitz, and others hurled vicious and vitriolic attacks against Afrocentric and multicultural scholars, characterizing them as "a cult of ethnicity" and "ethnic ideologues" who were promoting "filiopietistic commemoration" and "ethnocentrism" (Schlesinger, 1992) and teaching "myth as history" (Lefkowitz, 1996). This storm had been brewing for quite some time, as far back as debates about Negro history versus Black history (King, 1995).

It was into the eye of this storm that I graduated, armed with a bachelor's degree and secondary teacher certification, ready to teach and transform the lives of Black youth. I had learned about some of the Afrocentric scholars and their work while in undergraduate school at Hampton University through a student organization called The African Studies Cluster. With this information, I had a particular mission in mind – to introduce my new students to the Afrocentric perspectives that had transformed my life and helped me to go from an underperforming student with no direction on the brink of failure to an honor roll student with a serious sense of purpose and direction.

My first teaching assignment was in the fall of 1992 in a middle school in Newport News, Virginia, where the student body was about 50% Black and 50% White. I was one of six

African American male teachers hired at the school. The fact that this school had six new African American teachers was deeply significant and was the talk of the small school district. We were young, sharp, creative, committed, energetic, and professional. We became very close, four of us in particular. We were constantly strategizing to find ways to empower our Black students. The four of us worked together, prayed together, and fasted together regularly. We started a student organization for boys called "Brothers of the Same Mind," which met twice a week after school. On one of the days, we would discuss cultural and historical issues and on the second meeting of the week, we would play basketball.

We often found ourselves in conflict with the administration and some of the teachers who had been there longer than us and who didn't seem to have the same faith in Black children's ability to achieve and excel that we did. We found that our lesson plans and materials were being very carefully reviewed and scrutinized because we were attempting to teach lessons outside of the prescribed curriculum. We were told to take down certain posters about Black history and culture that were deemed offensive. On many occasions, we could hear where administrators were listening in on our classroom lessons by a certain click that the intercom made. It was not uncommon for one of us to be called to the office for questioning about our methods and materials. There were meetings where we had to justify the Black History Program our students had created with our guidance. We had to explain why certain "questionable" Black leaders whom some considered "offensive" were chosen to be highlighted in the program and why the program seemed to have a "militant" spirit to it.

In 1994, after serving two years at this school, I applied for a voluntary transfer to an inner-city middle school that had made front page news in the city paper for its chronic failure. The staff had been released and a new, visionary school leader hired. Those who wanted to

teach there could re-apply. I quickly applied because this was my target audience, the students I felt I could impact the most. The school was in a part of town with all the markers of urban blight – poverty, poor housing, unemployment, drugs, violence, etc. It was known in the community as "the Bottom." My application for transfer was accepted and the next year at that school I was voted Teacher of the Year. But only one of my other teacher friends would be there with me to continue at the new school the work we had begun at the previous school.

It was also in 1994, that the state of Florida passed landmark legislation that required the teaching of African and African American contributions across the curriculum. Florida Statute 1003.42 required that teachers teach "…the history of African Americans, *including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slaver**y***, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African American society [italics mine] (http://www.afroamfl.org).

When I first heard about this legislation in 2005, I was stunned. I couldn't believe such a law existed and I began to think how much easier my job might have been had I had this law to stand on. By 2005, I had spent thirteen years covertly teaching my students African and African contributions, accomplishments, views and values in my Language Arts and Reading classes. I had written and published four African-centered and culturally responsive books for students and teachers. I was a recognized and respected educator. But over those years, it was not uncommon for me to be called into special meetings with principals and assistant principals where my teaching methods and materials were called into question. I learned to turn in lesson plans that detailed what administrators wanted to see, but teach lessons infused with cultural content and consciousness that I knew my students needed.

The personal stress I felt was real and visceral, especially during those first years in Virginia, though I tried to remain centered. I felt like I had to put on cultural and spiritual armor every day and that I had to be covert rather than relaxed and transparent about what I was teaching. About a month or so after I moved to Georgia in 1996 and began teaching at a middle school in Stone Mountain, an announcement came over the intercom in the afternoon in a very authoritative tone, "Mr. Akua, please report to the main office."

"Damnit!!!" I thought to myself, as my eyes widened with anger and inquiry. "What did I do? I've only been here a month and I'm already getting called down to the office?!" I asked myself as I silently thought through lessons in my mind to see what could have been considered controversial. I made my way to the office, standing straight and tall, shoulders squared, ready to defend myself. Much to my relief and surprise, I was not called to the office to justify what I was teaching. My principal at this school was very supportive and had sent information about my recognition by *Ebony* magazine to the school board along with her thoughts on why I was an outstanding teacher. I was informed that I was going to be recognized in front of the school board for teaching excellence and for being selected as one of *Ebony* magazine's "50 Leaders of Tomorrow."

So when I learned about the Florida African American History Legislation years later, I thought about how empowering such legislation could be for students and teachers. Over the years, it was the African-centered methods, materials, content and intent of my teaching that helped me reach chronically underperforming students that others were unable to reach. My classroom was rarely plagued by disruptions and "behavior problems" because I used culturally responsive techniques for redirecting unwanted behaviors. Most often, my students were excited and engaged in learning.

The Florida legislation itself could not be said to be "Afrocentric" because it did not refer to "*centering"* or situating students in the best of African culture, history, views and values. Nonetheless, had I been a teacher in Florida, it seemed that this law would have provided an authoritative pedagogical place for me to stand as a professional educator. It would have allowed me to justify what and how I was teaching. "Where did this law come from? Who brought it into being? When was it passed?" were the questions that swirled in my head.

I learned about the African American History Legislation in early 2005 from a colleague who was an outstanding teacher down the hall from me. She was an elder who had been voted Teacher of the Year at the school where I was teaching in Lithonia, Georgia from 2003-2006. She was always upbeat, positive, and always doing creative things with her students. We talked often because we had similar expectations of cultural and academic excellence for our students. She had even used some of my published materials, like *A Kwanzaa Awakening* and *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance and Rediscovery* regularly with her seventh-grade students. One day she gave me the name and telephone number of someone she thought I should call in Florida. "They could use your work down there," she said.

I called, only to find that the person I had been referred to had died. But I was told he was an important member of the African American History Task Force. When I introduced the professional development I could provide and the accompanying materials, the person I was speaking with explained that she was the chair of the Task Force. Her name was Dr. Bernadette Kelley. In addition to being the Task Force Chair, she was also a professor in the school of education at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), an historically Black university. Dr. Kelley was the Principal Investigator for the Task Force grants and FAMU housed the headquarters of the Task Force, meaning that all Task Force business was facilitated

through FAMU. Dr. Kelley offered me the opportunity to come to Tallahassee and give a 30-minute presentation before the Task Force at their meeting the following month.

"I can't pay you," she said, "but I can take care of your hotel room." I jumped at the opportunity to share my work with educators whom I felt I wouldn't need to convince about its importance. My presentation was very well received and Dr. Kelley said that she and some of the others would probably be in contact with me. This was my introduction to the Florida African American History Legislation. Sure enough, she called a few months later and invited me to present to a group of teachers in Quincy, Florida (just outside of Tallahassee), over the summer. I was to provide professional development on how to infuse African and African American content into the curriculum and culturally responsive methods of instruction.

About a year or so later, Dr. Kelley asked me to create two online courses for teachers in the state of Florida. The first was called "African Beginnings" (2008) and was about ancient African history in Kush, Nubia, Kemet, Ghana, Mali, and Songhoy, and contributions to the content areas. I began work on it the same year I began my doctoral studies. The second online course, which I constructed and completed a few years later, was "The Middle Passage" (2012) which began with a chronology of the Moorish African influence in early Europe, their expulsion from Spain and the beginning of the *Maafa*, and the catastrophic interruption of African civilization and sovereignty by way of enslavement that led into the Middle Passage, the trip by ship from Africa to America that captive Africans were forced to endure.

These courses were a direct response to, and to be in alignment with, the Florida African American History Legislation, which required the teaching of *African* and African American history "*including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery*" [emphasis mine] (http://www.afroamfl.org). These online courses

opened up further opportunities to do a good deal of consulting throughout the state in several districts.

The short answer to the questions about the origins of the Legislation was that "Blacks pushed for the law under former Governor Lawton Childs, arguing that African-American students often lack a sense of their culture's place in American's development because it is overlooked in school" (Weber, 2009). But a deep desire to know the details of the life of this legislation – it's conception and birth – consumed me. I wondered if it happened in Florida, couldn't it happen in other states?

This research study is an outgrowth of my quest to reach and effectively teach African American children and all children – touching their souls and freeing their minds to learn. It is an outgrowth of my ongoing quest to reintroduce them to knowledge and insights that proved pivotal in transforming thousands of students I have taught over the years. As such, this quest has led me to seek out policies that empower teachers to reach and teach African American students with the best of our culture as a rich and rewarding reference and resource.

Statement of the Problem

The education and achievement of African Americans continues to be a contentious issue replete with deficit-based research, rationales for failure, and suggestions for closing access, opportunity, and achievement gaps (Hilliard, 1997; Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2003; Sizemore, 2008; King & Swartz, 2016). A few states have responded to the call from Afrocentric scholars and educators for African and African American cultural inclusion and infusion with legislation requiring that Black accomplishments and contributions be taught in the state's public schools. Most notably, Florida Statute-1003.42(h) requires that African and African American

contributions and accomplishments be taught in every subject across the curriculum in grades K-12. This legislation states that educators must teach

> efficiently and faithfully using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction, the following:
>
> …the history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African American society (http://www.afroamfl.org).

The current study, an Afrocentric case study policy analysis, seeks to answer the following research questions concerning Florida's Statute-1003.42(h). The research questions guiding this qualitative study are: How did this legislation come into being? Who was responsible for organizing and mobilizing the forces that brought it into being? What was it expected to change with regard to culture and education?

Theoretical Perspective

This Afrocentric case study of the Florida educational policy is rooted in a quest for African agency. Afrocentricity is "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (Asante, 1998, p. 2). The agency which the Afrocentrist seeks, in basic terms, is the power to act – and action is the execution of that power. Agency without action is impotent; both agency and action are necessary to bring about change. According to Asante (2007), Afrocentric theorist and one of the world's leading scholars in the field of African American Studies, "Afrocentricity seeks agency and action," and is "very specific in its reliance on self-conscious action" (p. 109).

An Afrocentric case study analysis of this policy is intended to examine the policy from the standpoint of the cultural image and best interest of African American children whose education should center them in the best of their own culture and prepare them to meet needs and solve problems in their own communities.

African language terms are employed in this research study to center the analysis on Afrocentric epistemological grounds. Just as language is critical to understanding the underlying meanings of European concepts, a linguistic lens is helpful here to understand African epistemological and governmental concepts. Asante observes, "Our liberation from the captivity of racist language is the first order of the intellectual…language is essentially the control of thought. It becomes impossible for us to direct our future until we control her language" (Asante, 1988, p. 31). Selected African language terms will direct and give deeper insight into this study.

As Asante noted, Afrocentricity creates what ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) people called a *djed*, meaning "a strong place to stand" (Asante, 2007, p. 15). Following Asante's lead, the current study seeks to offer African Americans, and interested others, a "strong place to stand" in understanding emancipatory policy production aimed to encourage academic and cultural excellence for Black children. It offers African Americans a window into the process of crafting legislation addressing specific issues raised by and for Black people.

A strong place to stand is needed with respect to curriculum policy because "the Afrocentric idea is essentially about location," principally because "African people have been operating from the fringes of the Eurocentric experience" and are therefore obstructed from a view of liberating possibilities (Asante, 2007, pp. 31-32). In this context, location is the

epistemological place where one stands to view, analyze phenomena, and participate in knowledge production.

The Afrocentric Canon

Africological methodology categorizes knowledge utilizing five Afrocentric canons that Reviere (2001) identifies (in Swahili): *Ukweli* (Truth), *Utulivu* (Justice), *Uhaki* (Harmony), *Ujamaa* (Familyhood), and *Kujitoa* (Devoted). According to Reviere: "Any inquiry must satisfy these five canons to be legitimate" (p. 710). These five Afrocentric canons were used as benchmarks to give this research authenticity. These canons were adhered to and the findings are discussed relative to these terms as criteria to ensure that Afrocentric agency will be illuminated in the inquiry and that the study will be aligned with Afrocentric values to guide the researcher. In other words, these criteria centered this research study in Afrocentric views, values, image, and interests.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how members of the community, educators, legislators, and members of the academy organized and mobilized to bring Florida Statute 1003.42(h) into being. Findings for this study may provide a template for future educational policy analysis and activism to pursue improved outcomes in education for African American children using Afrocentric theory and methodology.

Significance of the Study

African Americans have often felt disempowered in determining the type of education our children receive. We also have felt the need to advocate on behalf of our children to ensure not only an equitable education, but one that builds on cultural strengths and produces cultural as well as academic excellence (Hilliard & Sizemore, 1984). In fact, a common concern of many

African American parents is wanting their children to excel academically while also remaining culturally connected. As expressed by Ladson-Billings (1995), "One parent verbalized this as wanting their children to be able to 'hold their own in the classroom without forgetting their own in the community'" (p. 27).

The significance of this study rests in its potential to become a landmark in assisting African American parents to understand the most effective path to agency in education for their children. Understanding that path can also lead to understanding specific steps that may be taken to replicate or at least approximate similar policy outcomes in legislatures and school districts across the nation.

Asante has developed three characteristics that Afrocentrists should possess: (1) a commitment to cultural agency; (2) the lack of economic or moral fear; and (3) the willingness to pursue the objective of freedom (Asante, 2007, p. 36). With those observations in mind, this study also offers the opportunity to develop a set of Afrocentric education policy analysis imperatives.

For example, Afrocentric educational policy analysis should:

1. Be centered in "the image and interests" of what is best for Black children according to the desires of the Black community (Asante, 2007; Karenga, 2008).
2. Examine examples of African agency at work, especially community participation and collaboration between the community, the academy and those who legislate policy (Asante, 2007).
3. Illuminate pitfalls and plots (whether structural or specific) that seek to disempower and derail Black participatory democracy (Hilliard, 2007).

4. Offer "a strong place to stand" for those Africans Americans who desire to effect political changes, in general and political changes in education, in particular (Asante, 2007).

Background Issues

The title of this research study, "The Life of a Policy" is based in the understanding that in African culture, education begins pre-conception (Hilliard, 1995; Hilliard, 1997). This means that there were specific structures in place to guide parents before conceiving a child and structures in place to guide the child even before it physically came forth. As such, this examination of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) (the Florida African American History Legislation) begins pre-conception, that is, before it was conceived by legislators and educators, and what led to its conception. This examination includes an overview and analysis of Classical African Education (CAE) from the Nile Valley (Kemet [Egypt]) to the Niger Valley (the Songhoy Empire), Black movements in America for emancipatory education, and the role of leading Black scholars and educators and the African Centered Education (ACE) Movement as key elements in the development of the Florida African American History Legislation.

The life of a policy can be understood as occurring in four phases: (1) formulation; (2) legislation; (3) implementation; and (4) impact (Heck, 2004). This dissertation will focus on the first two phases (formulation and legislation). Values and culture play a significant role in policy production (Heck, 2004; Wilson, 1998). In addition to focusing on the first two phases of policy production, this study provides a paradigm for Afrocentric educational policy analysis. This study posits that an Afrocentric educational policy analysis centers African people as subjects, agents, and actors with agency with the intention of improving the life chances of African children.

One of the most daunting challenges that America has faced, with special attention in recent years, is improving the academic achievement of African American students. A number of factors are said to contribute to the dilemma, including savage inequalities (Kozol, 1992), the systematic dismantling of public education (Saltman, 2005), high-stakes testing (Hursh, 2008), the decimation of the Black teacher and leader workforce (Fultz, 2004), and corporate-backed charter schools replacing urban public schools (Buras, 2011). The reasons underlying African American students' academic challenges are usually cited as a series of problems, rather than one problem alone. One frequently cited problem is the assertion that current curricula in mainstream schools is not culturally affirming or truthful for African Americans. African American students are thought to be less engaged in their education when their cultural heritage is not properly recognized or represented (King & Swartz, 2014).

A body of educational researchers and practitioners has determined that culture is the key – the critical mediating factor in increasing academic achievement among African American students (Akua, 2012; Hilliard, 2003a; Hilliard, Payton-Stewart, & Williams, 1990; Hilliard & Sizemore, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 1994; King, 2005). The infusion of heritage knowledge (King & Swartz, 2016) was believed to be a missing link in the academic achievement of African American students and became a major area of contention on the national landscape of the late 1980s and through the 1990s. An Afrocentric or African-centered education (ACE) curriculum was believed by many scholars to be a part of the solution to increasing African American student achievement.

According to Shujaa (1994) and others, African American students have a history and a culture that has been dismembered through intentional miseducation via oppressive European systems of schooling intended to reproduce current or existing power relations. "Re-membering

[is] a process for recovering history by putting back together the multiple and shared knowledge bases and experiences that shaped the past" (King & Swartz, 2014, p. 1). African-centered educators regard this recovery and reconnection as essential to the educational process for African American students.

For the sake of clarity, it is important to note that for the purposes of the present study, the terms *Afrocentric* and *African-centered* are used interchangeably. Afrocentricity has a Pan-African thrust that identifies African people, wherever they are on the planet, as part of the global African family, even though they may have been separated or relocated through captivity or colonialism. Therefore, in this study the terms African and African American may be used interchangeably to emphasize that African American people are, in fact, African people. The researcher has taken this approach because there have been conscious and calculated mis-educational and political attempts to encourage African Americans to disassociate themselves with Africa and continental Africans.

In fact, education has always been an integral part of African culture, spanning the continent "from the Nile to the Niger" (Hilliard, 1997). Cultural grounding in history was inextricably tied to the process of education for African people (Karenga, 2001). This recognition was also the case for enslaved Africans in America, who often risked merciless flogging and physical mutilation for attempting to read and write (Webber, 1976). Coming out of the experience of captivity, education still loomed large as a central issue for African people in America. Recovery of African and African American cultural history was seen as a much-needed part of that process.

Watkins has observed that "Black curriculum theorizing…is inextricably tied to the history of the Back experience in the United States. Black social, political and intellectual

development in all cases evolved under socially oppressive and politically repressive circumstance involving physical and intellectual duress and tyranny" (Watkins, 1993, p. 322). So the context of education for Black children in America, guided *by* and *in* the image and interests of Black people, has always been a highly contentious and highly contested ground.

One of the prime areas of contention has been that of curriculum content. One of the reasons for this contention is that current public school curricula alienates African American students away from the best of their culture's views and values with inappropriate and incorrect information creating conceptual confusion (Hilliard, 1995) and curriculum violence (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2011). Conceptual confusion is the unclear and indistinct analysis of phenomena due to poorly defined problems. "No meaningful response to the problems can be developed as long as they are poorly defined. Further, the scope and scale of the remedy must match the scale and scope of the problem" (Hilliard, 1995). Curriculum violence is "the deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners" (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2011, p. 2). This term is used to indicate how hegemonic curriculum violates the humanity of its consumers when cultural views, values and perspectives are suppressed. The result is that "the prevailing curriculum organizes knowledge to defend the interests of the nation-state" (King, 2015) which has been shown to be antithetical to the interests of African American children (Sizemore, 2008).

African American educators and scholars also problematized methods teachers were using to reach African American students. With culture at the axis of educational achievement, African-centered educators called into question not only the curricular content, but also the competence of the teacher to utilize instructional methods in harmony with the nature and needs of Black children (Hale, 1986; Hilliard, 1997; King & Swartz, 2016). Prior to the publication of

Hale's *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Styles*, Black children were most often analyzed (and ultimately marginalized and pathologized) through the lens of the Western behavioral science tradition. "Black children are defined in white terms because white children are considered by psychologists to represent the norm" (Hale, 1986, p. 179). Hale not only critically analyzes that lens and its flaws, she introduces with clarity a more compelling and culturally congruent lens. Hale first demonstrates that the African American child is African, biologically and culturally, with cultural retentions that have survived the experience of enslavement. These cultural retentions deeply inform cognition – that is, thinking, thought, how thoughts are organized and deployed.

Further, Hale demonstrates that the overarching cognitive style that is privileged in American schools is analytical. While the analytical approach to cognition is privileged, it does not predominate as primary or preferred in African and African American cognitive learning styles. African and African American children tend to be *relational* in their cognitive approach (Hale, 1986, p. 34). This does not mean that they are *not* analytical, it simply means they tend to reach the analytical by way of the relational. The implication is that without the pedagogical bridge of the relational to the analytical, Black children struggle and suffer in the classroom. Teachers who do not know this create a widening gap, not just in achievement, but also in the ability of the Black child to further grasp information cumulatively over time. Consequently, "Black children enter school with excitement and enthusiasm. But the school crushes the creativity from the children, who cannot channel their energy until given permission to release it" (Hale, 1986, p. 77).

When teachers are trained in their schooling to use analytical approaches without an understanding or application of the relational elements of the African American cognitive style

which unlocks and unleashes the genius of the Black child, disengagement, behavior problems, and underachievement soon follow – or perhaps worse, blind following and indoctrination occurs among students who do achieve and excel. Add to this the grave oversight of the realities of racism, inequitable funding and constructed Black teacher shortages, we now have a context for rampant and chronic Black student underachievement.

Within the context of Africans in America and their views on education, the ideologies that informed infusing school curricula with African and African American history go back almost two hundred years. A number of 19th-century scholar activists such as Blyden, Delaney, Walker, and Garnet were very clear that an understanding of African history in the history of America and the world was essential to the education of African people and all people (Carruthers, 1999). In 1879, Delaney observed:

> The most striking character of the ancient Africans was their purity of morals and religion. Their high conception and reverence of Deity was manifested and acknowledged in everything they did…A people or race possessing in a high degree the great principles of pure ethics and true religion, a just conception of god, necessarily inherit the essential principles of the highest civilization (Delaney, 1984, p. 317).

Here, Delaney re-evaluates African history and culture to inform problems of his day, given that ancient Africans were operating with "the principles of the highest civilization." "Delaney argued that African peoples must develop their future worldview upon the foundation of the ancient and modern indigenous cultures" (Carruthers, 1995, p. 19).

DuBois and Woodson began to systematize the knowledge of African and African American history and culture for intergenerational cultural transmission – DuBois through his scholarly works like *The World and Africa* (1915), *Black Reconstruction* (1939) and the *Crisis*

magazine and Woodson through *The Miseducation of the Negro* (1933) and Woodson's publishing company, Associated Publishers, which published and distributed books and pamphlets for consumption primarily in African American communities.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 called into question the practice of separate and equal schools and deemed the doctrine of separate and equal to be unconstitutional. Blacks were primarily fighting for desegregation as opposed to integration. They wanted full funding of Black schools (Hilliard, 1997). However, the *Brown* decision dealt on the surface with integration, but in so doing actually produced disintegration – disintegration of Black schools, Black teachers and Black administrators as some 39,000 Black educators were demoted, displaced, fired or not hired (Fultz, 2004).

The quest for quality Black teachers, schools and historical recovery continued in the Black Power Movement and the Black Student Movement of the 1960s and early 1970s when "Black parents began to seek control over the public education for their children" (Piert, 2015, p. 27). Independent Black institutions (IBIs) began to sprout in New York City and across the nation, "started by parents who were frustrated with the lack of local control over public schools and the curriculum" (Piert, 2015, p. 28).

African-centered educationists were situated in public schools and independent private schools. Regardless of positionality, there was representation from African-centered educators both within and without the American public school system to effect curricular changes and academic outcomes for African American children. The creation of IBIs prompted the organization of these IBIs into one unified body for the sharing of information, resources and unity. In 1972, The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) was founded to unify a rapidly developing movement of Pan-Africanist oriented independent schools in the United

States (Asante & Mazama, p. 200). Linked to the community control of schools movement of the 1960s, CIBI's position was a departure from the push for integration of schools:

> The basic realization that the same authorities who managed public school segregation also managed public school desegregation led activists in cities such as New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, East Palo Alto, CA and Washington D.C. to initiate organized efforts to gain power over the public schools in their communities (Asante & Mazama, p. 200).

Control over public schools included not only the resources allocated and teachers hired, but the curriculum to be utilized. "The curricula in these schools were often African-centered because parents and educators were looking for innovative and culturally relevant ways to ameliorate the education of African American children" (Lee, 1992; Lomotey, 1992; Piert, 2015).

The increasing consciousness of African Americans about their history and culture led to more direct efforts by educators, scholars and legislators to define the problem with curriculum, give their perspective, make their perspective a priority, organize the people and galvanize the political power to enable the necessary changes (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990). The efforts of African-centered educators changed the national conversation in education and forced people to take a position (Lefkowitz, 1996; Schlesinger, 1992; Walker, 2001).

In 1984, Hilliard and Sizemore released *Saving the African American Child*, a comprehensive report for the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). Sizemore described the report as "a bold statement of expectations, high standards and accountability, released before these types of things became standard operating procedures for public school responses" (Sizemore, 2008, p. 77). Still a very important document today, "Saving the African American Child" contained not only the philosophical foundation and standards, criterion

performance goals, and again, long before these things became common language in educational discourse. Cultural excellence was a cornerstone of the report. Also in 1984, the state of South Carolina initiated legislation to infuse African American History into the public school curriculum.

In October, 1989, the First National Conference on the Infusion of African and African-American Content in the School Curriculum was convened in Atlanta, GA by Dr. Asa Hilliard and Dr. Lucretia Payton-Stewart (both from Georgia State University) in conjunction with Atlanta Public Schools and the Southern Education Foundation (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990). For three intensive days, nearly 600 registrants from across the country had a total immersion in the latest multidisciplinary scholarship on African-centered curricular infusion from some of the top scholars in various fields. The stated goal of African and African American curriculum infusion was "to provide information that will assure that students are presented with a more total truth about the human experience (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. *xxi*).

The response to Afrocentricity and the African-centered Education Movement by its opponents produced much criticism and fear that "revisionist" history would replace America's "traditional" history, views and values (Lefkowitz, 1996; Schlesinger, 1992; Walker, 2001). The response to the attacks against infusion was:

> African American curriculum infusion does not seek to replace one academic chauvinism with another to create false pictures of African people merely for the purpose of ensuring balanced representation. African people are a normal and natural part of the human experience that should be reflected in all subject areas. As a result, our conference's focus was multidisciplinary (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. *xxi*).

The Detroit Public Schools were a forerunner in the adoption of African-centered curriculum and making its infusion a mandated policy in the early 1990s as it simultaneously opened Malcolm X Academy and other African-centered public schools.

The impetus for the creation of African-centered schools was the need to have an African-centered curriculum, one that is centered in the image and interests of African American students and which focuses on meeting needs and solving problems in Black communities. A deeper understanding of African-centered education requires a more contextualized analysis of the literature and socio-cultural factors which led to Black people strategizing for policies which required infusion of African American history, developing African-centered curricula and organizing African-centered schools.

Chronology and Ideology in the Development of African-Centered Education

The following overview constitutes the foundation of what may be termed the African-Centered Education (ACE) Movement – an intentional, self-directed and self-determined effort to build, define, develop, and defend independent Black institutions while also carving and creating sacred cultural spaces in public schools and school systems. This movement began in 1968 with the founding of Ujamaa Schule in Washington DC (http://ujamaaschool.com/) by Dr. El Senzengakulu Zulu and later, Uhuru Sasa in Brooklyn, NY. The Movement continues to this day.

Konadu's (2006) *A View from the East: Black Cultural Nationalism and Education in New York City* offers a comprehensive look at the birth of African-centered schools, the activist context which created them and the Black Nationalist philosophy that guided them. Something very interesting happened in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. Simultaneously, the American Civil Rights Movement and its activist child, the Black Power Movement, were

peaking at the same time as the African independence explosion as Kwame Nkrumah led Ghana, Sekou Toure led Guinea, Patrice Lumumba led the Congo, and Nelson and Winnie Mandela and the ANC of South Africa were leading valiant revolutions to gain freedom from colonial domination.

The revolutionary fervor on both sides of the Atlantic brought with it a new consciousness that called into question systems of miseducation and white supremacist ideological schooling. The next logical step in the midst of fighting for and achieving liberation was to set up schools that would educate Black children in ways that reflected their image and interests. But there has been a "tradition of establishing Black educational institutions independent of white control predating the U.S. Civil War" (Konadu, 2006, p. 1).

The issue of what many African-centered educators refer to as "knowledge of self" was of prime importance for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam in setting up schools across the country beginning in 1932 (Ratteray, 1994, p. 133). Many of these schools are called Clara Muhammad School, in honor of Elijah Muhammad's wife who was an educator. In *Message to the Black Man in America*, Muhammad notes, "It is knowledge of self that the so-called Negroes lack which keeps them from enjoying freedom, justice and equality" (Muhammad, 1965, 31). This "knowledge of self" refers to the scientific and cultural legacy of African people prior to the experience of captivity.

Captivity came with the continuous and intentional suppression of correct knowledge while propagating misinformation and miseducation. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught, "if a [white] man won't treat you right, what would make you think he will *teach* you right?" (*The Final Call*, 2011). Elijah Muhammad's teaching, and by extension, Malcolm X's articulation of his teaching, had a profound effect on Black people in America. The teachings

called for a reconnection to the traditional ways that made African people respected throughout the world in ancient and medieval times.

The 1954 *Brown* decision had been a piece of legislation that did not deal with miseducation. Further, it did not challenge the power relationships within the existing educational system or social order" (Konadu, 2006, p. 22). Black people understood the relationship between education, elevation and empowerment. They understood that if education wasn't delivered from their perspective, didn't speak to the beauty of their culture, their needs as a people and the development of skills for solving problems in their own community, then it wasn't education at all. There was a distinction made between education and schooling. "Education within the context of one's culture, is the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next" (Konadu, 2006, p. 20). So Konadu observes that "the contemporary African-centered school movement marked a shift in the cultural orientation of the curricular content" (Konadu, 2006, p. 21).

Uhuru Sasa was an African-centered school, the centerpiece of The East, a community center in Brooklyn. Founded second only to Ujamaa Shule in Washington, D.C., Uhuru Sasa, which means, "Freedom Now," drew upon a Black Nationalist and African-centered philosophy and pedagogy. Uhuru Sasa also utilized part of the Kawaida philosophy called the Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. The mission of Uhuru Sasa was "the development of skills and thinking necessary for nationhood and liberation from the dominant political and cultural thought and behaviors" (Konadu, 2006, p.88). There was also the Imani Child Development Center which originally served as a place for Black women to leave their children while they were on duty at The East. But it morphed into a full-fledged day care center and pre-school in which children would further develop and strengthen their motor skills, learning skills (like reading,

writing, computation, and analysis), creative skills and develop positive self-images. Imani Child Development Center became a feeder school to Uhuru Sasa.

Independent African-centered education brought with it the push for its precepts and concepts to be implemented in public schools where the vast majority of Black children matriculated. This also raised the issue of how authentic an African-centered education could be in a public school setting. On this point, Kwame Kenyatta, a community activist later voted to the Detroit School Board to assist with implementation of African-centered schools and curricula, remarked:

> "Afrikan-centered education in public school is different from Afrikan-centered education in independent black institutions. Therefore, the Afrikan-centered curriculum in the public school will not be as strong as the one in independent school. I consider the public school system the contested zone. In the liberated zone you can do whatever is necessary to educate the students. In the contested zone you are in constant battle with the forces of the status quo." (Kenyatta, 1998, p. 4)

Binder identifies Portland's *African American Baseline Essays*, edited by Dr. Asa G. Hilliard III, as "the first link in the chain" for implementing an ACE curriculum in the nation's public schools. In 1981, Hilliard began consulting with the Portland, Oregon, school district on its desegregation plan. In the process, he brought together a team of scholars to research and write new materials – an initiative that Binder describes as "the first public school program that rightfully could be called a bona fide commitment to Afrocentrism" (Binder, 2003, p. 54). In 1987, Hilliard edited and published these works as the *Baseline Essays* and distributed them to other interested school systems in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and New York. Incidentally, Binder's use of the term "Afrocentrism" signals that she is not an insider since, as Asante

describes it, "Only those who are anti-Afrocentricity define the idea as Afrocentrism" (Asante, 2007, p. 23). While her research has many insights worthy of note, nuances such as this that indicate that she may not have delved deeply enough into the data.

According to the Portland Public Schools, the philosophy undergirding the production and use of the *Baseline Essays* was as follows:

- All geocultural groups have made and continue to make significant contributions to the world in which we live.
- No geocultural group is innately inferior or superior.
- People are interdependent and should coexist as one humanity.
- Students' achievement, self-esteem, and social skills will be positively affected by multicultural/multiethnic education.
- Parent involvement and community support are integral to the processes of effectively educating students.

(http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/curriculum/5024.htm)

The Portland Public School System also introduced the Hilliard Theory:

- Defamation of the name of a geocultural group creates psychological problems that can be addressed by rebuilding cultural identity (psychological health and mental liberation).
- Understanding and appreciation will occur if students learn the holistic and thematic history of geocultural groups.

(http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/curriculum/5024.htm).

The African American Baseline Essays constitute a reference for educators and parents in the six primary areas of language arts, math, science/technology, social studies, world music, and

art. The *Baseline Essays* were a foundational and fundamental element of the ACE movement because these writings presented the information that ACE activists contended was missing from the current curriculum. The thinking was that if the content of the *Baseline Essays* was infused into the curriculum, it would give a fuller and more accurate picture of the accomplishments, contributions, and perspectives of Africans and African Americans to all school children. Hilliard's original introduction to the *Baseline Essays* speaks to this intent:

> The *Baseline Essay* is intended to be a short story of the experience of a particular geocultural group within a particular academic arena from earliest times to the present.... 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" (http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/curriculum/5024.htm).

According to Carolyn Leonard, director of multicultural/multiethnic education in Portland Public Schools at the time, community activists were the impetus for the production and implementation of the *Baseline Essays:*

> *Without a doubt, the key stimulus for the quest for fundamental equity was the Black Community advocates* [emphasis added]. 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 (http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/curriculum/prefc-af.pdf).

Leonard indicates that community action was the critical component that made the difference in these critical documents being produced and adopted. Her first-hand observations are essential in understanding the active, vocal involvement of Black parents and organizations. This

definitive account serves as a powerful counter-narrative to prevailing notions that Black parents are uninvolved and don't care.

After the *African American Baseline Essays* were produced, published, and distributed, baseline essays for other geocultural groups followed: Asian American, European American, Hispanic American, American Indian, and Pacific Island Americans. The production of this ambitious series of essays rounded out the Portland Public Schools curriculum to create a truly multicultural curriculum. But it must be noted that the production and dissemination of the Baseline Essays did not go unchallenged. In fact, the Baseline Essays were criticized widely as inaccurate history and unscientific research by unqualified researchers whose credentials were called into question (Horwitz, 1995; Jaroff, 2001; Schlesinger, 1992;); 1993).

Nobles describes the aims of multicultural education:

> Multicultural education is an inter-disciplinary educational process rather than a single program. The process is designed to ensure the development of human dignity and respect for all peoples. An essential goal within this process is that differences be understood and accepted, not simply tolerated (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. 23).

Banks (2008) suggests that a major goal of multicultural education is "to provide all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their community cultures, within the mainstream culture and within and across other ethnic cultures" (p. 2). Banks observes that "Afrocentric means different things to different people" and that because of this there are many misconceptions about what it is. Asante's original definition is that Afrocentricity is "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African

culture and behavior" (Asante, 1998, p. 2#). Banks also notes the relationship between Afrocentricity and multicultural education:

> Afrocentricity, when Asante's definition is used, can describe the addition of an African American perspective to the school and university curriculum. When understood in this way, it is consistent with a multicultural curriculum because a multicultural curriculum helps students view behavior, concepts and issues from different ethnic and cultural perspectives. (Banks, 2008, p. 45)

Binder's study of the outcomes of the push for African-centered curricula, discussed above, offers revealing insights in comparing the struggle in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and New York. According to Binder's analysis, the intensity of Atlanta's infusion was "far-reaching" and wide, but lacked depth. The infusion in Washington, D.C., was deep but lacked width, since it was implemented at only one school (a school already in the public eye, at that). Binder observes that although ACE activists certainly had the attention of the people, the press and the system, New York state schools' response to the Afrocentric curriculum was best characterized as "outright rejection" (Binder, 2003, p. 84).

In addition to New York, Washington D.C., and Atlanta, Detroit played a prominent role in the African-Centered Education (ACE) Movement. In fact, on February 2, 1993, Detroit made the bold move of instituting African-centered education ideals system-wide:

> Whereas the students must be centered in their own historical and cultural heritage which fosters a positive self-esteem, develops group identity…be it finally Resolved that the General Superintendent directs the staff of the Detroit Public Schools to develop a comprehensive Afrikan-Centered Education Program which includes research and curriculum development, staff development, Pre-K-12 curriculum guides, an

> implementation time line, and other resources needed for curriculum development and implementation" (Kenyatta, 1998, pp. 30-31).

In addition, Detroit's Malcolm X Academy is the first African-centered *public* school (http://detroitk12.org/schools/robesonmalcolmx/). Detroit's initiatives with public African-centered education, like most other programs, was research-based. It grew out of the need to address specific needs of African American male students who were being expelled at epidemic rates in the early nineties. Between 1991-1993, "14,274 males were expelled from Detroit schools." In addition, "more Detroit males, aged 15-19, graduated to the criminal justice system than graduated from Detroit high schools" (Smitherman & Watson, 1996, p. 35). From this crisis, the Saving the Black Male Conference was convened in March of 1990. Expecting at best 100 people, the conference organizers were overwhelmed with a standing-room only crowd of 500. Featured presenters included Dr. Jewelle Gibbs and Haki Madhubuti. The success of this gathering led the superintendent to appoint a Male Academy Task Force.

> The Malcolm X Academy, as Detroit's first Male Academy, was created early in 1991. By the summer of that year, however, overwhelming demand for educational programs for the sons of the Detroit community led to the School Board's decision to create two additional Male Academies: the Paul Robeson and the Marcus Garvey Academies (Smitherman & Watson, 1996, p. 43).

Malcolm X and Paul Robeson Academies would later be combined to prevent closings due to budget cuts.

Kenyatta (1998) indicates that a set of *Indaba* principles for instituting Afrikan-centered education in Detroit were set forth after "intense [guiding] discussions with Dr. Molefi Asante, Anthony Browder and Dr. Leonard Jeffries to name only a few" (Kenyatta, 1998, p. 29). *Indaba*

is a Zulu word meeting "business" or "meeting," colloquially meaning, "business to be handled at a meeting." The Indaba principles constitute the cultural and educational business that must be handled at African-centered schools.

What is especially noteworthy in each of these cases (New York, Washington D.C., Atlanta, and Detroit), as well as in other settings, is that ACE activists were able to bring ACE initiatives before national and international audiences, thereby affecting public discourse and forcing people to take a position. Their activism also deeply influenced local school board policies. This achievement is especially significant because it was done with little funding and in the midst of vitriolic attacks from the opposition, including media campaigns to discredit the research methods, legitimacy of the scholarship, and the scholars themselves. ACE activists organized nationally and internationally with a Pan-African program of consciousness-raising information funded primarily in and by African American communities (Kenyatta, 1998; Konadu, 2009, Smitherman & Watson, 1996).

As an aside, it is worth noting here that there is a difference between race and culture. The opponents of African-centered education and the propagators of white supremacist ideology have blurred the lines of race and culture and made them appear to be synonymous. However, race has been shown to be a western cultural construct deployed for the purposes of assigning superior and inferior status upon various geopolitical groups of people (Hilliard, 1997; Hilliard, 2003). Culture, on the other hand, as defined by Nobles, is "the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices peculiar to a particular group of people" (Nobles, 2006, p. 164). He goes on to note that "culture provides…a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality" and "culture gives meaning to reality" (Nobles, 2006, p. 164). Therefore, race is synthetic, a man-made

phenomenon emerging from the European male imaginary for the purpose of control, exploitation, and domination. Conversely, culture is a normal and natural occurrence in the ways of the human family as people congregate and collaborate based on shared history, identity, and desired destiny.

Culture as the Cornerstone of African-Centered Education

The ACE Movement placed the issue of culture front and center. For African-centered educators, culture is the cornerstone of a foundation that equips children to flourish and fulfill their obligations to the community. ACE activists posed African cultural excellence as an integral part of academic excellence in the national conversation about education in the 1980s and 1990s. But the No Child Left Behind legislation shifted the conversation in 2000 from culture to standards and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). While NCLB shined "a spotlight on long-standing inequalities (Darling-Hammond, 2008, p. 67) based on *race*, it did not call the issue of culture into question. In addition, it erected "new standards" without addressing or resolving "old inequalities" (Darling-Hammond, 2008, p. 66).

The ACE Movement, under assault, has continued to struggle to keep culture at the forefront of dialogue. As a matter of fact, with the economic downturn after 9/11 and the housing crisis of 2008, many urban school systems are focused on basic survival – just trying to keep their doors open. Regrettably, often authentic cultural competence is not a part of their professional development or student achievement agenda.

The current landscape of public education is rife with national high-stakes testing, scripted curricula, persistent inequality, and alarming trends toward wholesale dismantling of public education exemplified by the drive toward privatization and charter schools. Attention has turned away from many of the demands made by ACE activists and turned toward Common

State Core Standards, an educational reform movement that is financed by the same economic elite that seek to privatize public education at the expense and to the detriment of the very children it is supposed to serve (Farrell, 2015).

Schooling appears to be more and more irrelevant in the midst of sweeping economic and demographic changes that have shifted the locus of power further away from those who need it most. Even the current focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in many schools fails to incorporate African's numerous contributions and perspectives to the origins and innovations in these fields that make possible the current technologies we enjoy.

Hilliard and his colleagues determined that the history of African and African Americans in public schools and higher education was deficient in six major areas. A review of these six areas demonstrates that the deficiencies that he illuminated over 25 years ago are still glaring omissions and distortions today:

1. There is no significant history of Africans in most academic disciplines before the slave trade.
2. There is virtually no "people" history. The history of African people is presented, if at all, in episodes and fragments of post slavery.
3. There is virtually no history of Africans in the African diaspora. Students do not get a sense that the descendants of African people are scattered all over the globe.
4. There is no presentation of the cultural unity among Africans and the descendants of Africans in the African diaspora.
5. There is generally little to no history of the resistance of African people to the domination of Africans through slavery, colonization, and segregation apartheid.

6. The history of African people that is presented in mainstream curricula fails to explain the common origin and elements in the systems of oppression that African people have experienced, especially during the last 400 years (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. *xx-xxi*).

Many people seem to think that ACE is a matter of increasing self-esteem among Black students by teaching Black history throughout the year. This oversimplified view completely misses the mark. In reality, culture continues to be the key – the critical mediating factor in increasing student achievement among African American students and students of color (Akua, 2012). Black pride may be a natural by-product of ACE, but it is not the immediate aim.

Shockley (2008) notes that Hilliard and Kunjufu have called for the U.S. Department of Education to declare a state of emergency regarding the education of Black children. Shockley offers three policy recommendations:

1. Include African-centered theories and philosophies as part of undergraduate teacher education programs.
2. Incorporate Akoto and Akoto's (1999) three phases of re-Africanization as part of the education of students, especially within schools where African Americans predominate.
3. At the district level, charge schools with providing an education for Black children that incorporates information and knowledge on the following imperatives:
    a. Their African identity
    b. Pan-Africanism
    c. African cultures and value systems
    d. Black nationalism

e. Community control/institution building

f. Educating as opposed to "schooling" Black students. (Shockley, 2008)

These policy recommendations are based in educational research and practice, backed by data that suggests that if such policies were implemented effectively, there would be not only a dramatic increase in student achievement, but an orientation toward serving one's community as well.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review defining and explaining African-centered education (ACE), its connection to Classical African Education (CAE), the ACE Movement, and policies that came into being as a result of ACE activism. Chapter 3 explicates the Afrocentric theoretical thrust of this study, the epistemological stance, methodology and methods. Chapter 4 examines the research findings based on interviews with key agents and actors who were responsible for bringing Florida Statute 1003.42(h) into being. Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the significance of the research findings and recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

African-Centered Education and Policy Analysis

This chapter provides a definition, explanation, and review of African-centered education (ACE) and connects it from ancient times to the present. In addition, this chapter provides a literature review of the ACE Movement, policy production and the policies that came about as a result of the ACE Movement. African-centered education is the process of using the best of African culture to examine and analyze information, meet needs and solve problems in African communities (Asante, 2007; Karenga, 2008). African-centered education places African people and African perspectives at the center of what is studied. It positions African people as subjects with agency rather than disempowered objects on the periphery of others' experiences (Asante, 2007).

Classical African Education

A careful review of the research literature to date reveals a number of essential elements that characterize what I have termed Classical African Education (CAE) "from the Nile to the Niger" (Hilliard, 1997), an educational approach that informs current African-centered education and is widely recognized by contemporary scholars (Browder, 1992; Carruthers, 1984, 1995, 1999; Clarke, 1994; Finch, 1998; Hilliard, 1987, 1995, 1997; Hilliard, 2003a; Imhotep, 2011; Jackson, 1970; Karenga, 1984,1990, 2002; Karenga, 2008; Maiga, 2009; Mazama, 2003; Obenga, 2004; Rashidi, 2011; Robinson, Robinson, & Battle (1987); Van Sertima, 2001).

In this review of the literature, I have distilled the essential elements of Classical African Education into a brief list. The thirteen characteristics of Classical African Education (CAE) are as follows:

1) *Self-determination:* The assumption of agency to define, defend, and develop culture, civilization, and a system of education based on shared vision and values, privileging the needs of the community over the individual, was paramount (Karenga, 1999). In addition, early and ancient Africans stepped forward on the stage of human history as a free, proud, and productive people. "The first act of a free people is to shape the world in its own image and interest" (Karenga, 1999, p. 50). This they did out of a natural sense of collective will to power, from the unification of Upper Kemet and Lower Kemet by King Narmer in East Africa to the unification of the Songhoy Empire by Sunni Ali Ber in West Africa and the establishment of Great Zimbabwe in southern Africa. (Asante, 2002).
2) *Scientific:* Early Africans were involved in painstaking observation of natural, metaphysical, and celestial phenomena; the scientific method is written in the preface of the almost 4000-year-old Ahmose Mathematics Papyrus (Browder, 1992; Finch, 1998; Obenga, 2004). As Hilliard (1995) states: "Ancient Kemet was a high-tech society. It required armies of educated people" (p. 122). The corpus of ancient African scientific innovation and education is vast, covering all the sciences, and these advances still baffle modern science today. For example, the Dogon charted the Sirian star system 600 years before NASA figured it out. Brecher, a baffled astronomer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, remarked, "They [the Dogon] have no business knowing any of this" (Finch, 1998, p. 235).
3) *Systematic:* CAE was well-organized throughout the land, as Hilliard puts it, "from the Nile to the Niger" and beyond (Hilliard, 1997). African education was spiritual and philosophical, but also practical and functional. In the Nile Valley, Ipet Isut University was the parent unit of the world's first recorded national system of higher education. No evidence of a comparable institution of comparable age (as early as 2000 B.C.) exists anywhere else in the

world" (Hilliard, 1995, p. 135). In addition, "…there was in ancient times and there remains today a cultural unity between Kemet and the rest of the African continent... Ancient African nations influenced other civilizations worldwide" (Hilliard, 1995, p. 119).

4) *Scholarly:* CAE was based on ancient, consistent methods of meticulous documentation; volumes of extant papyri document achievement in every area of human endeavor: reading and writing, language and literature, architecture and engineering, agriculture and astronomy, mathematics and medicine, science and technology, etc.; in addition, there are over 100,000 manuscripts at Timbuktu (in present-day Mali) and even more in Niger (Browder, 1992; Hilliard, 1995; Maiga, 2009).

5) *Sophisticated:* CAE is embedded in a philosophical system that Carruthers (1995) and Obenga (2004) refer to as African Deep Thought. For example, the oldest word in human history relative to teaching and learning is *seba* (), as it appears in the *medu netcher* (hieroglyphic) language of ancient Kemet (Egypt). *Seba* has three primary meanings: "teach," "door," and "star." Along with other evidence, the concept of *seba* leads us to the African philosophy of education that suggests, "The teacher opens the door to the universe so that the student may shine like a star." Each character in the construction of the word *seba* has a symbolic meaning relative to what it means to be a master teacher (Obenga, 2004; Akua, 2012). *Seba* is the etymological root of the Greek *sophia* which means "wisdom" and from which we get the word philosophy (Obenga, 2004). An example of the sophisticated nature of knowledge in West Africa is the Dogon ways of knowing explained below. *Seba* is the etymological root of the Greek *sophia* which means "wisdom" and from which we get the word philosophy (Obenga, 2004).

6) *Structured:* CAE involved degrees of initiation based on commitment and progression through a curriculum. An example of this structured progression is expressed through the Dogon ways of knowing, which represents only one of many similar systems:
    a) *Giri So*: "word at face value"; literal and superficial level without depth.
    b) *Benne So*: "word from side"; establishing a view; sight with thought and perspective.
    c) *Bolo So*: "word from behind"; finding essence and meaning; penetration into the breadth and depth of knowledge
    d) *So Dayi*: "clear word"; sight beyond vision; sight with complete unrestricted understanding (Finch, 1998; Karenga, 2002, p. 545).
7) *Specific:* Classical African Education was pointed toward mastery, not minimal competency; demanding standards of excellence were passed on through rigorous study, practical application, and a culturally intrinsic sense of honor and obligation to do so (Finch, 1998; Hilliard, 1995). "The process of education was not seen primarily as a process of acquiring knowledge. It was seen as a process of transformation. . .through successive stages of rebirth. Disciplined study under the guidance of a master teacher was the single path to becoming a new person" (Hilliard, 1995, p. 123).
8) *Sacred & Spirit-Centered*; Hilliard notes that ancient Kemetic Africans arrived at the belief in the One Creator from their scientific observation (Clarke, 1994; Finch, 1998; Hilliard, 1995, p. 123-124). "Traditional African education and socialization is at its base a deeply spiritual process that is designed to transform a person from a creature of appetites, whose attention is primarily consumed in a never-ending search to satisfy those appetites, to a spiritual being who seeks to become like the divine creator, living in Ma'at for eternity"

(Hilliard, 1997, p. 82). For example, the Songhoy of West Africa use the word *Irkoy* (the Songhoy concept of God; "our divinity"). "This word is contained in the words (concepts) for Village, Villager, and Chief of the Village, which suggests an understanding of the inherent Divinity of each" (Maiga, 2009, p. 89)

9) *Sankofa*: CAE is based in sankofa, that is, returning and retrieving the best of the culture (Karenga, 2008) and placing it into the hands of those who created it through intergenerational cultural transmission (Hilliard, 2003). "The *sankofa* ideogram is a bird reaching back with its beak into its feathers and 'is a symbol representing the quest for knowledge and the return to the source.' Niangoran-Bouah further states that the ideogram implies that the resulting knowledge 'is the outcome of research, of an intelligent and patient investigation'" (Karenga, as cited in Mazama, 2003, p. 87).

10) *Serudj-ta*: Classical African Education is centered around *serudj-ta* or restoration (in the ancient language of Kemet [Kemet]). When Hatshepsut, the woman who became king of the 18th Dynasty of Kemet (circa 1508 B.C.E.) had to deal with the aftermath of the rule of the Aamu, she declared, "I have raised that which was in ruins; I have restored that which was destroyed" (Karenga, 1999, p. 62). When King Shabaka of the famed 25th Dynasty of Kemet (circa 760 B.C.E.) "found a great work of the ancestors in ruins, the Memphite text on creation, …he restored it 'so that it was more beautiful than before'" (Karenga, 1999, p. 62).

11) *Sovereign:* Classical African Education was an integral dimension of sovereign empires recognized in the known world as centers of authoritative knowledge; people came from Europe and Asia to study at the great learning centers of the Nile Valley, the Niger Valley during the Songhoy Empire, and the places where the Moors ruled in Europe from 711 C.E.

to 1492 C.E. (Robinson, Robinson & Battle, 1987; Hilliard, 1995; Rashidi, 2011; Rashidi, 2012).

12) *Social Justice:* Honor and obligation in the midst of the primary ancient ethical principle of Ma'at was critical to the ancient African worldview. In fact, justice is one of the seven Virtues of Ma'at (Karenga, 1984). As the vindicated must be able to say on the Day of Judgment, "I have come here to bear witness to the truth and to set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who have no voice" (Karenga, 1990, p. 78). In addition, the Yoruba ethical teachings declare, "Surely humans have been chosen to bring good into the world" (Karenga, 1998).

13) *Security:* Classical African Educators practiced careful protection and preservation of all that was sacred through the library sciences (Hilliard, 1995) and the military and martial arts (Rashidi, 2012). Hilliard references a tomb at Gizah during the sixth Dynasty of Kemet where a functionary has the title "Governor of the House of Books." He cites research of Myer and Maspero demonstrating that the ancient Kemites not only "had a literature, but that the libraries would be so important, that a functionary of the court would be required to preserve a royal library" and that these libraries were in existence more than 2,500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ (Hilliard, 1995, p. 122) – i.e., more than 4,500 years before the present day. Abeegunde makes specific references to the African origins of the martial arts and military sciences with linguistic connections (Abeegunde, 2008) and Rashidi even indicates the migration of these arts from Africa into Asia (Rashidi, 2012). Africans operated on a principle that that which is worth preserving must be protected.

The African-Centered Education Movement

African-centered education is the process of using the best of African culture to examine and analyze information, meet needs and solve problems in African communities (Asante, 2007; Karenga, 2008). African-centered education places African people and African perspectives at the center of what is studied. It positions African people as subjects with agency rather than disempowered objects on the periphery of others' experiences (Asante, 2007).

Based on the available scientific research literature available, African-centered education must be seen as a continuation of a tradition of ancient classical African educational excellence, a tradition that existed prior to the *Maafa*, the catastrophic interruption of African sovereignty and civilization through enslavement and captivity. The understanding of this continuous legacy is critical, given that African cultural history has been intentionally dismembered and deformed into a fragmented and episodic narrative on the periphery of European history (Hilliard, 1997; King & Swartz, 2016).

It is worth noting that relevant literature on African-centered education precedes the use of the terms African-centered or Afrocentric. Appendix B contains a contextual timeline of ACE activism. Woodson's (1933) *Miseducation of the Negro* formed the critical analysis and explanation for why an African-centered approach to education is necessary (Asante, 2007). His incisive and insightful examination of how the schooling of Black people prepared them for a sense of inferiority and servitude in a system of white supremacy ideology revealed the need for a shift in the content and intent of education. Woodson,

> "a seminal figure in the Black intellectual tradition, understood the value of locating African people at the center of phenomena when he explained the role that school curricula play in the denigration of Africa and the disregard of African and Diasporan achievements in diverse disciplines" (King & Swartz, 2016, pp. 9-10).

Over seventy years after the publication of *Miseducation of the Negro*, Asante would note that Woodson's most well-known work "established the principles that would govern the development of the Afrocentric idea in education" (Asante, 2007, p. 78). Emancipation of enslaved Africans after the Civil War allowed Africans to legally pursue their insatiable urge for education. The former captives had been systematically denied education and even savagely punished when they pursued it (Anderson, 1988; Washington, 1901).

Again, this deep desire for education should be seen as a continuation of African excellence in education that had been interrupted by captivity, in addition to the basic universal human desire to know and learn. The pursuit of education allowed formerly enslaved people to rapidly reduce illiteracy in their ranks. Just thirty-five years after Emancipation, the Black literacy rate jumped "from five percent to nearly fifty percent in one generation in one of the most remarkable expressions of literacy in the world" (Asante, 2013, p. 12). As Hilliard points out, "Africans excelled wherever literacy training was offered. The fear was not that Africans could not learn, the fear then and later was that they would" (Hilliard, 1997, p. 36).

However, in the process of learning and excelling, the content of what was being learned would soon be called into question. As Piert concluded, "The African-centered educational movement in the United States was due to the collective and self-determined efforts of Africans in America, both free and enslaved, to provide education for themselves and their children" (Piert, 2015, p. 13).

As a student at Berea College in Kentucky in 1901, Woodson recognized "a glaring omission in his education" (Burkett, McDaniels, & Gleason, 2006, p. 29). The glaring omission was that of the teaching of his own history and culture. Although the student body of Berea College was integrated (or at least more so than most other schools), none of Woodson's classes,

discussions, or examinations included study, research, or writing about the culture, life, or contributions of African people to American or world history. For Woodson, this seemed to be a gaping hole and major contradiction that would lead him to research, write, organize, and publish information about Black people tirelessly for the rest of his life. The infusion of African and African American cultural content into school curricula became the focal point of his life's research and work. In the years to come, this infusion would become a focal point for educational activists seeking to provide a more meaningful education for Black students.

Woodson co-founded the Association of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in 1915, launched *The Journal of Negro History* in 1916, and created the Associated Publishers in 1921. ASNLH convened Black scholars to write and discuss issues about Black history and *The Journal of Negro History* became the intellectual arm of his endeavors making a strong place to stand for Black scholars to publish their work at a time when few others would (Dagbovie, 2014). Mary McLeod Bethune lent her considerable scholarly insights and administrative mastery to the organization, serving as its president from 1936-1952.

Associated Publishers was a groundbreaking publishing enterprise that had a significant impact on African American education, producing novels, poetry, and young adult books in addition to scholarly works. Along with the creation of Negro History Week, Woodson's consistent efforts at publishing and distributing information about African and African American history and culture began to take root in Black communities and his reach began to broaden, impacting many Black school leaders. For example, Dagbovie observed, "Nannie Helen Burroughs, founder of the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C., required her students to study African American history before graduating" (Dagbovie, 2014, p. 112). Woodson's texts often supplemented standard texts or were used as standard texts in Black

schools. By 1950, the time of Woodson's death, Negro History Week was deeply woven into the fabric of African American life and education through school celebrations and proclamations from cities around the country.

The breadth and depth of Woodson's contributions were so compelling, Dagbovie situates "the early black history movement…from approximately 1915-1950," which was the beginning period of Woodson's publication and distribution of materials to the year of his death (Dagbovie, 1914, p. 20). During his institution-building, he also served for a time as Dean at Howard University and West Virginia Collegiate Institute. Woodson's accomplishments constitute the primary portion of this early Black history movement establishing a critical common ethic that many African-centered scholars and educators would later model: service from the community to the academy.

Selected Empirical Studies of African-Centered Schools

Shockley asserts: "Afrocentric education is the act of placing the needs of Black children at the center of their education" (Shockley, 2011, p. 1031). A number of studies have demonstrated the viability and success of ACE strategies in public and private school settings. However, the inability and unwillingness of other public schools to address issues of curricular infusion and correction have prompted many African Americans to build independent institutions where they can determine the curriculum without interference. Lee's study of Independent Black Institutions (IBIs) and their African-centered methods finds they "offer some promise of hope for public education" (Lee, 1992, p. 174). In particular, her review of the work of New Concepts Development Center (NCDC) in Chicago, founded by her and her husband, Haki Madhubuti, is compelling. The results of NCDC's use of African-centered pedagogy is also very revealing:

> They [graduates of IBIs] are decidedly not among the gang members, dope dealers, and high school dropouts that plague our communities. NCDC alumni have graduated from or are currently enrolled in some of the most prestigious public schools and gifted programs in the Chicago school system. Even NCDC graduates identified as having learning disabilities have been found to hold their own in public schools. Public school principals enthusiastically welcome NCDC graduates because they have come to expect these children to enjoy reading, patiently engage in mathematical and scientific problem solving, think critically about social issues, be well-rounded in their creative interests and talents, and behave well" (Lee, 1992, p. 174).

Lee further observes, "… in its 20-year history NCDC has accepted every student who has registered to attend, and only two children have ever been asked to leave the school. In the primary grades, NCDC has actually tended to accept more students who have not had success in public school" (Lee, 1992, p. 175).

Schools like NCDC were forged in the fires of struggle – and despite their early success, their long-term survival is by no means assured. NCDC converted from an Independent Black Institution to a network of three charter schools. Established in 1998, Betty Shabazz International Charter School (BSICS) is a network of three African-centered charter schools serving K-12 students in Chicago: Betty Shabazz Academy (grades K-8), Barbara A. Sizemore Academy (grades K-8), and DuSable Leadership Academy (grades 9-12) (http://www.bsics.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=179010&type=d). However, these institutions' future is uncertain:

> Last November [2015] the Chicago Board of Education voted to close Barbara A. Sizemore Academy, an Afrocentric charter, citing not only its significantly low national

> test scores, but also scores well below the city median. Supporters of Barbara A. Sizemore mounted a public campaign to fight its closure, pointing to, among other things, the emotional and cultural value it provides for its students. While the Illinois State Charter School Commission decided to keep Barbara A. Sizemore open, overriding the Chicago Board of Education, the experience highlighted the school's precarious situation. (Cohen, 2016).

Many Afrocentric schools have been under intense scrutiny while also facing the difficulties of inadequate funding. Several Afrocentric public schools, while producing tremendous results from effective leaders, ended up ousting their leaders or closing all together. In Lansing, Michigan, for example, Sankofa Shule Charter School was closed even though it had once been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* and the *Wall Street Journal* for its academic excellence (http://www.wilx.com/home/headlines/8501107.html) (Buffum & Erkens, 2008). Philadelphia's Imhotep Charter High School was an academic and athletic powerhouse boasting a 100% graduation rate and winning the state in boys' basketball and football. However, it ousted its founder, M. Christine Wiggins, who was responsible for developing its African-centered curriculum and raising the $10 million to build the state-of-the-art school site (http://www.philly.com/philly/education/20141105_Imhotep_Charter_sued_by_related_nonprofit.html).

As Watson and Wiggan noted, "The 1980s and 90s witnessed a surge in Afrocentric schools, through the implementation of district immersion programs" (Watson & Wiggan, 2016, p. 117). They further observed that "students attending Afrocentric schools fared better cognitively, socially, emotionally and academically than students in traditional schools (Watson & Wiggan, 2016, p. 117). Their findings also revealed that employing Afrocentric and "non-

hegemonic curricula is socially and culturally beneficial for students, especially in the area of racial identity and awareness" (Watson & Wiggan, 2016, p. 133).

Durden's study of African-centered education in public schools in Missouri in the early 2000s showed similar results from African-centered education:

> As a result of the implementation of African-centered schooling strategies, students at Chick Elementary and Sanford B. Ladd are among the top performing in the state of Missouri [in 2006]. An example of Chick's academic success was that 48% of Chick Elementary students, compared to 24% of Black students and 36% of White students statewide, scored at the proficient or advanced level on the Missouri Assessment Program's fourth grade math test in 2005. Because of the indisputable success of students at Chick, in 1995, there was a court-ordered mandate to create Sanford B. Ladd in Chick's image. At Sanford's inception it was the lowest performing school in the district (48 of 48). Now, Sanford is recognized as the most improved school in the state and holds the title of being among the top ten highest performing schools in the state of Missouri (Durden, 2007, p. 29).

While Chick Elementary enjoyed the notoriety of being recognized for academic excellence by *Time* magazine, *Newsweek* magazine and the Missouri House of Representatives, its leaders and parents were engaged in a struggle for almost two decades to keep the doors open and under the leadership of Audrey Bullard, the school's pioneering leader, who instituted the African-centered curriculum and spearheaded the delivery of instruction that made Chick a city, state and national model. Despite consistently producing excellence and outperforming most other schools in the district and the state, Bullard was eventually replaced after continuous

clashes with the school board, superintendents, lawsuits and fights over funding (Wilson & Gross, 2012)

In all, Durden studied five African-centered schools across the country. "While those five African-centered schools have shown impressive academic results for Black students," she writes, "there is still resistance to infusing African-centered thought into American schools" (Durden, 2007, p. 30). Durden further asserted that "the question of why African-centered schooling is not being implemented in American schools is not a question of its impact on student achievement but rather the threat it poses on maintaining systematic hegemony" (Durden, 2007, p. 30).

Hilliard observed that the achievement at Chick Elementary School "is a very important demonstration of the fact that there is no conflict between having an African-centered school and having excellent performance on standardized achievement" (Hilliard in Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2003, p. 134). Hilliard further observed the "achievement gap" few are talking about, "a gap displayed in circumstances where the poor, cultural minorities, Africans often surpass the performances of their more wealth y peers of any ethnic background" (Hilliard in Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2003, p. 134).

It is important to note here that centering of students in the best of their culture to increase academic excellence is a phenomenon that works not only for African American students but also for other students who have been traditionally marginalized. A Mexican American Studies course had a powerful and profound impact on Latino students in Tucson Unified School District. Teachers centered students in heritage knowledge using indigenous epistemology, pedagogy and language. Prior to its inception, Mexican American students were dragging the bottom state graduation rates at only 46%. The use of heritage knowledge in this

program and process resulted in a 93% graduation rate, the highest in the district (Palos & McGinnis, 2011). However, regrettably, the program was dismantled because, in the words of then Tucson Supt. Tom Horne, "There are better ways to get students to perform academically and to get them to want to go to college than to infuse them with racial ideas" (Palos & McGinnis, 2011).

The use of culture-centered knowledge should not be confused with superficial attempts at multicultural education centered around ethnic food, fashion and festival (Karenga, 2008). Authentic use of heritage knowledge and culture-centered knowledge examines values and worldviews with a focus on empowering students to solve present problems using the best of their traditional culture as a rich, rewarding and revealing resource. Sleeter has observed that the field of ethnic studies is founded on "explicit identification of the point of view from which knowledge emanates and the relationship between social location and perspective" (Payne, 2012).

Maximizing the potential of America's youth, preserving the legacy of cultural contributions that makes America unique, and catalyzing innovation and production while extending and expanding the scope of possibilities for the life chances of all Americans is indeed dependent on the nation's ability to embrace culture as a bridge to academic success and human excellence. The nexus of African-centered Education, Multicultural Education and Ethnic Studies offers a rich and revealing look into the possibilities for achievement when students are taught using the best of their culture.

According to Shockley (2011), "Afrocentric education is marginalized in mainstream discussions because some people are uncomfortable with the notion of dealing with Black people's reality for prolonged periods of time" (p. 1043). If Shockley's assertion is correct, it

can obscure the clear and compelling results many African-centered educators and African-centered schools are producing. As Lee notes, "'the proof is in the pudding'…the principles that have inspired the pedagogy and cultural environment of NCDC and other independent Black schools are human and humane, stimulating and inspirational, a worthy model for others to follow" (Lee, 1992, p. 175). Moreover, Durden notes, "students who attend African-centered schools are not only equipped with the tools to compete intellectually, but also with cultural pride and honorable character" (Durden, 2007, p. 31). She urges "serious consideration to how an African-centered schooling experience can become a prototype for schools across the United States that serve Black students" (Durden, 2007, p. 31).

Tedla concluded, "Since we cannot understand humanity or the universal unless one's identity and/or experience is grounded in a specific culture (the particular); it is important that one begins by learning one's own history and cultural heritage, first" (Tedla, 1996, p. 211). Similarly, Hilliard determined, "Any approach to educating African teachers, and any teachers who will work to transform African students, must take into account two realities: 1) the African cultural tradition and 2) the political and economic environment within which people of African descent are situated – especially the last four centuries" (Hilliard, 1997, p. 99). At a time when many African American students struggle with academic underachievement, this review of educational research literature provides strong indications that African-centered education can and should inform education reform policies and initiatives.

Theorizing Educational Policy Developments

In reviewing the pursuit of academic excellence by African American students and their families, a consideration of educational policy developments is also pertinent. Educational policy is an over-arching indicator of the direction in which a system and its initiatives are headed.

This section will discuss a brief review of the educational policy literature. It is important to note that this is an Afrocentric educational policy analysis because it is centered in the image, interest, views and values of Black people for the purpose of advancing the educational achievement and life chances of African American people.

According to Wilson (1998) "The policy process involves the means whereby society attempts to reach certain self-defined goals or to satisfy certain social needs, and arrives at the rules by which it will govern its behavior in doing so" (p. 166). Heck suggests that the purpose of educational policy is "to advance particular political viewpoints or to address problems perceived as pressing" (Heck, 2004). In short, "policy may be defined as the process through which a political system responds to demands to handle a public problem" (Heck, 2004, pp. 6-7). But policy-making is not necessarily a clear-cut or a clean-cut process. It is often marked by conflict, controversy and confrontation. Wilson further observes:

> This process involves conflicting and collusive interactions between various groups of society who project different perceptions of its goals and needs and who wish to legitimate and exercise different rules by which the society's goals are to be attained and its needs satisfied (Wilson, 1998, p. 166).

African American History Policies in Selected States

The state of South Carolina was a forerunner in recognizing the need for the infusion of African American history into the curriculum. The South Carolina Council for African American Studies (SCCAAS) reports:

> In 1984, South Carolina state lawmakers recognized the need for a broader, more inclusive portrayal of the nation's history that would recognize the experiences, culture and contributions of African Americans. They carried into law, under the Education

> Improvement Act of 1984, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-29-55, that stipulated that by the 1989-1990 school year, each public school of the State must instruct students in the history of the black people [African-Americans] as a regular part of its history and social studies courses. They also require under this law that the State Board of Education shall establish regulations for the adoption of history and social studies textbooks, which incorporate black [African-American] history and shall, through the State Department of Education, assist the school districts in developing and locating suitable printed materials and other aids for instruction in black [African-American] history (http://sccaas.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1581466).

However, the journey from policy to practice can be quite long and arduous. Fidelity of implementation and timely implementation can be intentionally delayed or tabled simply because, while an issue may have been made into policy, it has not been made a priority. "Justice too long delayed is justice denied," the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote from a Birmingham jail in 1963 – and the delays continue. Consider the fact that the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was passed in 1954, and the U.S. still has segregated schools in 2016. In addition, *Brown v. Board of Education* dealt with integration and never addressed miseducation. *Brown v. Board of Education* also did not pre-suppose the dysconscious racism (King, 1992) that would ensue as a barrier to quality education for Black children. King defines dysconscious racism as refers to an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given (King, 1991).

South Carolina put forth measures to ensure systematic implementation of a policy for infusion of African American history:

In an effort to establish the schools' status with regard to carrying out this legislation, the Education Oversight Committee sanctioned a study from the Avery Research Institute of the College of Charleston. From this report, it was determined that while many schools observed, on some level, African American history, the practice of teaching an African American curriculum was random and yielded little measurable results. The barriers most commonly referenced in the report revealed a lack of knowledge of the content and a lack of awareness of the law. (http://sccaas.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1581466)

The report then put forth the following recommendations:

- Develop a clearing house for information on resources available to teachers who need to supplement their curricula with the most current information in African American history.
- Provide more opportunities for training for teachers.
- Recognize the innovations that some principals and teachers are using by holding an annual conference on the teaching of the African American experience in the state.
- Develop a statewide website that lists resources prepared and recommended by the State Department of Education.
- Ensure that the state evaluation standards for schools recognize their compliance with the EIA provision for the teaching of the African American experience.
- Develop a standard of measurement for the state's African American history program that accurately and effectively measures actual student knowledge about the African American experience (http://sccaas.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1581466).

A group of concerned educators organized themselves for the purpose of ensuring that the schools and school systems in South Carolina would be in compliance with the Black History legislation:

> Recognizing the paucity of evidence of African American contributions in the state's current curriculum, a group of 12 educators from higher education, K-12, and other educational foundations gathered to establish the South Carolina Council for African American Studies (SCCAAS) in January 2006. The group determined as its mission to promote higher standards in all subject core area curricula and instruction for the schools of South Carolina. (http://sccaas.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1581466)

South Carolina was not the only state that saw reform relative to culture and history. The Black residents and others in several major cities began to call into question the curriculum their children were learning in the public schools.

The Florida legislation, New Jersey, New York, and Illinois have all convened an "Amistad Commission" for a better and more accurate rendering of the role African Americans have played in the development of the United States of America. The Amistad Commission is:

> …named in honor of the group of enslaved Africans led by Joseph Cinque who, while being transported in eighteen hundred thirty-nine [1839] on a vessel named the *Amistad*, gained their freedom after overthrowing the crew and eventually having their case successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court (http://www.dos.ny.gov/amistad/legislation.html).

The law for New Jersey's Amistad Commission was passed in 2002. The statute indicates the specific duties and responsibilities of the New Jersey Amistad Commission as it relates to public education:

a) to provide, based upon the collective interest of the members and the knowledge and experience of its staff and consultants, assistance and advice to public and nonpublic schools within the State with respect to the implementation of education, awareness programs, textbooks, and educational materials concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African-Americans to our society;

b) to survey and catalog the extent and breadth of education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African-Americans to our society presently being incorporated into the curricula and textbooks and taught in the school systems of the State; to inventory those African slave trade, American slavery, or relevant African-American history memorials, exhibits and resources which should be incorporated into courses of study at educational institutions and schools throughout the State; and to assist the Department of State, the Department of Education and other State and educational agencies in the development and implementation of African slave trade, American slavery and African-American history education programs; and

c) to act as a liaison with textbook publishers, public and nonpublic schools, public and private nonprofit resource organizations, and members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives and the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly in order to facilitate the inclusion of the history of African slavery and of African-Americans in this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic schools (http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2002/Bills/PL02/75_.HTM).

It is worth noting that New Jersey's Amistad Commission, in explaining its duties, evoked the language of Asante's definition of Afrocentricity:

> The Amistad Commission's goal is to change the landscape for the study of United States and world history by placing *Africans and African Americans at the center of the narrative as agents rather than as bystanders or victims who live on the margins* of the United States and the world. Our mandate has shifted from one of inclusion to one of *infusion* [emphasis added] (http://www.state.nj.us/education/amistad/).

1) New Jersey's three-fold stated goals for the Amistad Commission are as follows: To infuse the history of Africans and African-Americans into the social studies curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete and inclusive history.
2) To ensure that New Jersey teachers are equipped to effectively teach the revised social studies core curriculum content standards.
3) To create and coordinate workshops, seminars, institutes, memorials and events which raise public awareness about the importance of the history of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in global context (http://www.state.nj.us/education/amistad/).

New York's Amistad Commission, formed in 2005, is slightly different from New Jersey's. It does not deal with African history prior to the African slave trade. This is significant omission, because Hilliard noted six deficiencies in most school curricula, the first of which is the fact that "there is no significant history of Africans in most academic disciplines *before* the slave trade" (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. *xx*). New York's legislation states:

> It is the policy of the state of New York that the history of the African slave trade, American slavery, the depth of slavery's impact on our society and American history, the

> triumphs of African-Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country, and the involvement of the entire nation, is the proper concern of all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of the state of New York (http://www.dos.ny.gov/amistad/legislation.html).

While this legislation is good, needed, and necessary, it is still insufficient. It should be noted that both the New Jersey and New York Amistad Commissions, while very progressive in using some of the language of Asante regarding centering African American s in the narratives, also have a heavy emphasis on slavery. In addition, these states' legislation violates the assertion of Robinson et al. (1989) and Hilliard (2003b) that infusion should be interdisciplinary, not just in the social studies classroom. It is worth noting, as well, that New Jersey's legislation uses the term *inclusion*, as opposed to *infusion*. Inclusion connotes that the information on African slave trade and African American contributions will be added to the curriculum. Infusion suggests that the African American *perspective* will be added, as well.

The Illinois Amistad Commission, again, while admirable, makes the same mistakes as New York and New Jersey:

> It is the policy of the state of Illinois that the history of the African slave trade, slavery in the Americas, the depth of their impact in our society, and the triumphs of African-Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country is the proper concern of all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of the state of Illinois (http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0285).

Again, here, we have a heavy emphasis on slavery and its effects. To suggest that this is a needed addition to school curricula is not incorrect, it is simply woefully incomplete. Indeed, slavery cannot be properly contextualized without a thorough understanding of Africa's past

prior to enslavement. While there is still much work to be done across the nation, certain gains have made way for African-centered curricular reform. As a result of Florida Statute-1003.43(h), the State of Florida convened an Education Commissioner's Task Force on African and African American History. The law, Florida Statute-1003.43(h), was passed in 1994 and indeed required that public school educators teach African and African American contributions across the curriculum:

> …the history of African Americans, *including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery*, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African American society [emphasis added] (http://www.afroamfl.org).

A law of this scope and magnitude is only as powerful as those who enforce it. The Florida Task Force wanted to ensure that educators were empowered with the proper knowledge and training to execute the mandates of the law. The specific mission of the task force is as follows:

> The State of Florida's Task Force on African American History is an advocate for Florida's school districts, teacher education training centers, and the community at large, in implementing the teaching of the history of African peoples and the contributions of African Americans to society. The Task Force works to ensure awareness of the requirements, identify and recommend needed state education leadership action, assist in selection of adoption by the state, provide training, and build supporting partnerships (http://www.afroamfl.org).

The state of Florida and its Commissioner's Task Force stand as a model for moving from African-centered educational perspectives to progressive educational policies. While there are

many more gains to be made relating to compliance with the law, legislation has certainly cleared the way for manifestation. In Florida, this legislation provides a *djed,* strong place to stand (Asante, 2007), for African-centered educators to close the gap between what Black students are currently achieving and what they are capable of achieving. In addition, African-centered educational objectives should begin to be employed in early childhood educational settings (Boutte & Strickland, 2008).

Of all the states that have legislation requiring the teaching of information about African Americans, Florida's is the most comprehensive. While the New Jersey, New York and Illinois Amistad Commissions are commendable, they are incomplete in that they deal primarily with the African slave trade and history courses. The Florida legislation deals with the *African* and African American contribution to all disciplines, pre-K through twelfth grade. This approach is more consistent with Robinson's (1989) and Hilliard's (2003b) perspectives on infusion. Through African-centered education concepts, educators and policymakers have found concrete examples and answers to some of the most challenging questions we face in education today. Today's troubled educational climate has obscured many of the goals and demands of earlier Afrocentric education activists. Yet it seems clear that the African-centered Education (ACE) project is still much needed to increase student achievement.

In the famed 25th Dynasty of ancient Kemet, an educational policy was set forth by King Shabaka Neferkare. An important ancient document from the Old Kingdom, described by Shabaka as "a work of the ancestors" (Lictheim, 1973), had been found to be worm-eaten, with parts that were almost indecipherable. The text had been written and preserved for more than 2,000 years before Shabaka's time and was a critical foundational part of the "sacred science" curriculum (Schwaller de Lubicz, 1982) of ancient Kemet. Its rescue and reconstruction was

seen as essential to reviving and restoring Kemetic culture at a time when it was rising from foreign rule.

> The policy set forth by Shabaka was that this ancient document should be restored and made more beautiful than it was before, so that people could benefit from the knowledge contained therein (Karenga, 2002; Lictheim, 1973; Obenga, 2004). On a less grand but similarly ambitious scale, the architects of the Florida statute were calling for a revival of traditional African and African American knowledge and culture in the public school curriculum in the way the legislation was articulated.

Language and Educational Policy

An understanding of language and the definitions of key terms frames the discussion of knowledge and knowledge production in educational policy. Boyles notes, "Historically, policy…has been a focus of debate between those who wish to maintain the traditions that a policy represents and those who wish to enact change in the society a policy effects" (Boyles, 2009, p. 593). However, as Boyles points out, the etymological root meaning of policy has been changed over time:

> The word policy has its origins in the Ancient Greek word *polis*, which means 'city' or 'state'. From *polis* comes *polites*, meaning citizen, and *politea,* meaning both 'government' and 'citizenship'. The Assembly was both the governing body and the citizenry in Ancient Greece. Indicative of such a union is that citizens and the government were one and the same. As the Romans developed their society, the Greek *politea* shifted to the Latin *politia,* which means simply, 'the state' (Boyles, 2009, p. 594).

This shift in the meaning of policy from Greco-Roman culture that Boyles elucidates is indicative of the schism between "we the people" and government that is supposedly "of the

people, for the people, by the people." And of course, in the imagination of America's founding fathers, African people were never meant to be a part of "we the people" *or* a "government of the people, for the people, and by the people." This schism between citizenry and the state (along with second-class citizen status of African Americans) created and perpetuated disempowerment and disenfranchisement in communities of color, who have found it increasingly difficult to effect civic change in the political arenas of America. Nonetheless, the activism of African American people and communities of color offers rich and revealing histories of agitation, organization, and activism toward changing policy (Hilliard, 1997).

But Carruthers offers an African-centered critique problematizing the concept of policy and politics in the polity:

> In Kemet, there was governance without politics. Politics comes from the Greek root *polis* which means 'city' or, more appropriately, 'city-state.' Therefore politics emerges as the act of governing the autonomous Greek city… The central problem of European political philosophy and political practice was how to reconcile the chronic conflicting interest groups within the *polis*. The *polis* was plagued by at least two mutually hostile groups, the haves and the have nots…Kemetic wisdom of governance (which developed within the context of a *country* rather than a city) did not admit the legitimacy of the division in the first place. Conflicts of interest were handled through litigation of private individuals and groups rather than [through] politics among constitutionally or philosophically based power groups (Carruthers, 1986, pp. 3-4).

Carruthers' critique is both prelude and preface to a deeper, more contextualized understanding of governance in Africa. When wedded to white and western intellectual ideas and ideals, African people have difficulty breaking the bonds of this conceptual incarceration and confusion

to gain access to their own cherished cultural traditions – traditions which made them recognized throughout the world for educational excellence, literary production, scientific innovation and public administration (Hilliard, 1997; Finch, 1998; Van Sertima, 2001). But when these sacred traditions are uncovered, many insights can be gained and gleaned for the common good.

Just as language is critical to understanding the underlying meanings of European concepts, a linguistic lens is helpful here to understand African epistemological and governmental concepts. Asante observed, "Our liberation from the captivity of racist language is the first order of the intellectual…language is essentially the control of thought. It becomes impossible for us to direct our future until we control her language" (Asante, 1988, p. 31). On the question of language, Ani asserts, "Ultimately the liberation of our thought from its colonized condition will require the creation of a new language" (Ani, 1994, p. 10). By 'new language', Ani is referring to the resurrection of African languages to conceptualize African intellectual thoughts and ideas. Maiga posits, "Language is the key to studying the spirituality, the culture, traditions, and worldview of African peoples" (Maiga, 2009, p. 89). He concludes, "…it should be stressed that people who are not informed about themselves cannot build their future, especially when their language and culture are not the language of their education" (Maiga, 2009, p. 148). But when African people use their own terms, concepts, idioms and definitions, then analysis is centered in their image, interests, views and values.

Ubuntu, for example, is an African philosophy that means, "I am because we are. Because we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1969). It speaks to the inextricable interconnectedness of people and the how the welfare of one individual or group is absolutely dependent on the welfare of the other. In addition, the root of *ubuntu* is *ntu*, which refers to "the cosmic universal force…the basic element which unifies the universe…the essence of life and living" (Phillips in

Azibo, 1996, p. 83). This force is both immanent and transcendent. So the unity of *ubuntu* is only possible through the cosmic universal force of *ntu*. These ideas constitute the ties that bind African people (and ultimately humanity) together in a community, society and nationality. Notably, "Ubuntu is an African philosophy that hearkens back to the [Kemetic] concept of *Maat*, or that can be found in the Akan notion of *onipa paa* and the Yoruba idea of *Iwa Pele* (Asante & Ledbetter, 2016, p. 11).

African People and European Political Concepts: A Need for Cultural Re-Centering

African people did not wait in ignorance for European concepts of governance like democracy, socialism, or communism to have a civilization. As Clarke observes, "Africa did not stand in darkness waiting for Europe to bring the Light" (Clarke, 1991). An analysis of the positionality of men and women in relation to the means of production is not new to African people. Indeed, the Songhoy Cosmogram illustrates the worldview of the people of the Songhoy Empire of West Africa. The Songhoy Cosmogram is a circle divided equally in four parts, each part contains an ideogram in indigenous Songhoy language that represents *Irkoy* (God), *Aru* (Man), *Woy* (Woman) and *Goy Jiinawey* (Tools of production) (Maiga, 2009). The equally divided parts of the Songhoy Cosmogram suggests that each part needed to maintain societal balance. "This balance depends upon the harmonious relationship between woman, man, God, and the tools of production" (Maiga, 2009, p. 125). This *balance* is based on an understanding of *truth, justice, righteousness, reciprocity, order* and *harmony* – each of which constitutes the seven principles of Ma'at from ancient Kemetic deep thought thousands of years before Marx, Engels, Lenin and other European political theorists and leaders.

Embedded in the very structure of Songhoy culture and governance is the fundamental linguistic connection of the inherent divinity of various elements of society. An Afrocentric

educational policy analysis then, must recognize the inherent divinity of African people and create the distribution of opportunity and resources that harmonizes with their divinity. Key words are infused with the word *koy* meaning God/Divinity." So *Ir**koy*** means, "God our Divinity," ***Koy**ra* means "village that is the habitat of our Divinity/God, ***koy**raboro* is "villager blessed to live in a place chosen by God" and *Bon**koy**na* means, "Chief of the village who is blessed to be appointed by God" (Maiga, 2009, p. 89). This notion of the inherent spiritual divinity of key elements in society is foreign to the fundamentals of European philosophy and political science. So Asante posits, "…we should assert African languages as a way of preserving knowledge since so much knowledge has already been lost" (Asante in Asante & Ledbetter, 2016).

Socialism and communism are not only foreign ideologies to the African, but both often place notions of race and culture second to class. Communists focus on class, and while there is no denying that a class analysis is needed and necessary, we must be mindful of Asante's assertion that in America, "race functions as class" (Asante, 1988). Certainly, there were African leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere who embraced African socialism and used it to help lead their countries to independence. But often, concepts of socialism and communism without a contextualized understanding of traditional African ways of governance fall short of the goal of liberation.

While the concepts of socialism and communism certainly have useful tools, they have the potential to de-center Africans and take them off of their own terms. African people of pre-colonial times had their own forms of social communalism, which predate modern European socialism and communism. Their social and political practices were indigenous to their culture, ways and mores. In *Notes for an African World Revolution: Africans at the Crossroads*, John

Henrik Clarke observes, "The ideals that went into the making of the concept of the term called socialism [and by extension, communism] were already old in Africa not only before Karl Marx was born, but also before Europe was born" (Clarke, 1991, p. 34). He also notes, "If either of these systems [socialism or communism] is to be used for Africa's salvation, African scholars, thinkers, and politicians must reshape these systems and Africanize them to the point where they are applicable to Africa's situation" (Clarke, 1991, p. *xiii*).

The Black Radical Tradition is a collection of Pan-African, Black Marxist and Black Nationalist ideologies that challenges systemic racism and seeks liberation for Black people and societal change. While this tradition is an indisputable and inseparable part of our history, many of its leaders who leaned toward socialism or communism still had to jockey for position and power within white-led organizations (Kelly, 1994). Many of these radical Blacks had to strategize and organize within organizations not their own, with ideologies not their own. Black leaders may not have considered the philosophies of socialism and communism in cultural terms, but in what they felt were practical political terms.

Marxist analysis arose out of the aftermath of the European industrial revolution. African-centered scholars take the position that appropriating African emancipatory thought from European analyses and ideologies is not sustainable. In *African Power*, Hilliard notes, "The European poor, on the whole, did not make common struggle with the African poor. We must remember this when oppressors try to make a common cause argument with the African poor because they may be poor…" (Hilliard, 2003, p. 29). He further observes, "We do not know who we are, cannot explain how we got here, and have no sense of our destiny beyond mere survival. *Most of us hope to hitch a ride on someone else's wagon with no thought whatsoever as to where that wagon may be going*" [italics mine] (Hilliard, 2003).

This is not to say that strategic alliances are not needed. It is to say that Africans must be centered on their own ideological grounds when initiating and continuing analyses and alliances. So, it is good to understand European intellectual tools…and then move significantly beyond them. This is not a narrow, myopic or essentialist view that is blind to the universal issues of humanity. On the contrary, it recognizes that all people approach their problems and the universal problems from their cultural standpoint. The African should be no different, regardless of where (s)he is on the planet. An authentic Afrocentric analysis is not devoid of a class analysis; it just begins from a different place. It contains a critical lens which deconstructs class-based oppression, but then moves significantly beyond it to deeper cultural issues that often go unrecognized.

Without socialism or communism, we are expected to wed ourselves to democracy, which is promoted as the Wonder bread of political governance. One of the basic characteristics of eurocentricity is that it promotes its ideas as universal. Therefore, we are led to believe that democracy is the best choice for everyone. It is privileged and presented by the West as the ultimate example of civilization. However, the term democracy situates and centers us deep in Greco-Roman (European) culture, once again. Moreover, in *The Destruction of Black Civilizations*, Chancellor Williams demonstrates that ancient Africans had what today is called democracy and had it continent-wide as an integral part of their culture. In a section entitled "Origin of African Democracy," Williams declares, "What we now call 'democracy' was generally the earliest system among various peoples throughout the ancient world" (Williams, 1987, p. 162). He further observes:

> A continent-wide study of the traditional customary laws of the Blacks, for example, enabled us to learn, for the first time, that a single constitutional system prevailed

> throughout all Black Africa, just as though the whole race, regardless of the countless patterns, lived under a single government. A similar continent-wide study of African social and economic systems through the millennia reveals the same overall pattern of unity and sameness of all fundamental institutions" (Williams, 1987, p. 21).

Current systems of "democracy" that are wed to capitalism, manipulate the masses, prey on the poor, police the world, and profit from manufactured disasters cannot be left to define what real democracy is or should be.

The Policy-Making Process

Values play heavily in the policy-making process. As Heck (2004) notes: "Policy actors define policy problems, interpret values and proper courses of action. . . .Not only is a value scheme embedded in using policy to resolve problems, but the choice itself announces the values of policymakers and the system" (pp. 6-7). Wilson (1998) further observes, "Which group will get its views and rules, or a significant number of them, to prevail and be accepted as the legitimate views and rules adopted by the society as a whole, will depend on the social power and effectiveness of that group compared to other groups" (p. 166).

In addition to values, culture plays a seminal role in policy production. Heck notes that Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) used a cultural paradigm to explain the process through which policies are made. They emphasized that policymakers play a key role in transforming cultural values into policy actions. "Cultural values," according to Heck, "shape institutions and their traditions, and these values are embedded in the policies that result" (Heck, 2004, p. 7). All educational ideas are ideas about culture (Asante, 1994). Policy, then, can be said to perpetuate certain cultural ideas, ideals, and norms. In analyzing educational policies, then, the question of whose values and whose culture is being employed and reinforced must be considered.

In earlier studies on policy, Kirst and Walker demonstrated that "the process of public policy-making is necessarily political in character" (Kirst & Walker, 1971). Taking this into account, politics and policy decisions are often undergirded by overt and covert economic agendas and considerations. As Kirst and Walker observed, "economic policy provides a fairly close analogy to educational policy. In our economic system, everyone's decision to buy and sell ultimately shapes the economy" (Kirst & Walker, 1971, p. 504). Boyles indicated that "in educational policy research, ideas for policy analysis become entangled in market logic and accountability schemes…." (Boyles, 2009, p. 599). Likewise, Buras (2012) noted that educational policy reforms in post-Katrina New Orleans were largely shaped by educational entrepreneurs whose decisions were based more on their commitment to capital accumulation than on the needs of the students and communities being served.

Economic considerations notwithstanding, Kirst and Walker found that organizations were able to mobilize and galvanize resources and attention to specific issues toward policy development:

> Associations of teachers and special subjects can be very influential at the state level and use their power base for preserving state curriculum requirements. Vocational education, physical education, and home economics teachers use their NEA state affiliate to ensure that their specialties are stressed in the local schools (Kirst & Walker, 1971, p. 491).

From a review of educational policy literature, at least three essential steps in the policy making process can be extrapolated:

1. Concerned citizens seeking change organize in the form of professional organizations, community groups, think tanks, coalitions, etc., to push an agenda (Kirst & Walker, 1971).

2. Often a document is produced to justify the changes a particular group is seeking to effect through policy (Buras, 2012).
3. Monies are raised and solicited to staff think tanks, produce literature, influence politicians, and negotiate the drafting and passing of legislation (Buras, 2012; Wilson, 1999).

In the realm of educational policy-making, persistent efforts to improve African American student performance have yielded significant legislation in some states (though not all). These states have responded to the cultural and academic needs of African American students, and indeed for the benefit of all students, by requiring, by law, that certain elements of African American history and culture be taught. A law, in and of itself, is not likely to be African-centered. It can, however, create space for African agency to operate. It can allow for African-centered interpretation and implementation.

Theorizing Policy Analysis

According to Heck (2004), policy analysis is "focused on understanding *policy processes* and effects as they relate to particular policies" [emphasis mine] (Heck, 2004, p. 31). Understanding how policies are formulated and how groups organize and mobilize around their interests is a key component in policy analysis. As indicated earlier in Chapter 2, values play heavily in the policy-making process. Heck further notes:

> Policy actors define policy problems, interpret values and proper courses of action. . . .Not only is a value scheme embedded in using policy to resolve problems, but the choice itself announces the values of policymakers and the system (Heck, 2004, pp. 6-7).

Wilson further observes,

> Which group will get its views and rules, or a significant number of them, to prevail and be accepted as the legitimate views and rules adopted by the society as a whole, will depend on the social power and effectiveness of that group compared to other groups (Wilson, 1998, p. 166).

This overview of policy literature suggests that policy formation occurs at the nexus of culture, economics, power and positionality. It also suggests that groups who effectively utilize or access these elements will effect the creation or change of policy.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This research study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Afrocentricity. Afrocentricity means "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (Asante, 1998, p. 2). It would be inconsistent and incongruous to use Afrocentricity as a theoretical perspective and then select a non-Afrocentric research methodology. In selecting a methodology for this research study, I considered issues of congruence. I wanted to make sure that my theoretical perspective, epistemology, methodology, and methods were in complete alignment. Africology is the research methodology that aligns with the Afrocentric theory (Asante & Mazama, 2005). Although Africology is an emergent methodology, it harmonizes with the theoretical lens I used in this investigation.

Throughout the research process of this Afrocentric case study policy analysis of Florida Statute 1003.42(h), I have been mindful of my reflexivity as a researcher. Roulston (2010) observes, "Reflexivity refers to a researcher's ability to be able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics" (p. 116). As an Afrocentric educator, I am mindful of what helped me achieve both cultural rapport and academic success from my students over the years. As an Afrocentric researcher, I bring that body of experience as an educator to this research study. And I see those experiences as an asset that adds a type of breadth and depth to this study that is often missing in educational policy analysis. Thus, the methodology used in this policy analysis case study is consistent with Reviere's position on Afrocentric research:

> The inclusion of the personal is, therefore, necessary for Afrocentric research. One's life experiences influence all aspects of the research process; the topics one chooses to do,

how one interprets the data collected, and even the conclusions to which one comes (Reviere, 2006, p. 264).

As I proceeded to design this study, it became clear that this investigation would be as much about the Afrocentric theoretical lens and its correlative methodology, Africology, as it is about analysis of educational policy from a standpoint that is different from the predominate Eurocentric perspective in the research literature. I came to understand, as well, the importance of my personal experience as an African-centered educator with regard to this methodology. Thus, this study contributes both to the analysis of an important arena of educational reform policy as well as the methods that can be used to investigate these issues from the worldview perspective of the community that is involved.

Afrocentricity and Education

Asante's insights about Afrocentricity as it relates to education have a direct bearing upon this Afrocentric educational policy analysis case study, which seeks not only to illuminate the subject position of the agents and actors who brought Florida Statute 1003.42(h) into being, but also to elucidate why and how they did it. Asante has noted:

> In education, Afrocentricity means that one provides students with the opportunity to begin study of the world, its people, concepts, and history from the point of view of the African child's heritage. Thus, the African child is not an object but a subject. No discipline of knowledge is alien to the African person from this perspective. (Asante, 2007, p. 79)

Wynter has written extensively on ways the status of alterity has been imposed on Africans and indigenous populations (Wynter, 1990). Alterity refers to the way those being studied have been dislocated and de-centered. Asante also notes that "Alterity is an attack on

centricity; it seeks to relocate the centeredness of the African away from Africa" (Asante, 2003, p. 147). Mazama likewise observes, Afrocentricity:

> . . .contends that our main problem is precisely our usually *unconscious* adoption of the Western worldview and perspective and their attendant conceptual framework. The list of those ideas and theories that have invaded our lives as "normal," "natural," or even worse, "ideal, is infinite" [emphasis added] (Mazama, 2003, p. 4).

Mazama goes on to indicate that Africans' and African Americans' unwillingness to recognize these ideas in the European cultural ethos has led to African-based cultures being named only as footnotes on the margins and periphery of others' experiences.

Some have argued that Blacks are not monolithic and that there can therefore be no Afrocentric way of knowing. What this perspective fails to take into account is what Diop referred to as the "cultural unity of Black Africa" (Diop, 1989). Indeed, his study confirmed that while Africa is, in fact, very diverse, there are deeply unifying scientific, linguistic, cosmological, and philosophical elements, continent-wide, and even throughout the diaspora, that inform African ways of knowing and being. Therefore, Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework poses a liberatory function for research and is explicit about the emancipatory possibilities of such research.

Njia (a Kiswahili word which means "the way) is the Afrocentric ideology of victorious thought (Asante, 1988). An Afrocentric orientation poses African people not as victims, but as victors. While it does not ignore systems, situations, and circumstances that have victimized Africans, it poses these systems, situations and circumstances as temporary and seeks to illuminate agency demonstrated by Africans in and coming out of even the most horrific

circumstances. "Afrocentricity stresses the importance of cultivating a consciousness of victory, as opposed to dwelling on oppression" (Mazama, 2003, p. 6).

Kawaida Philosphy

In this research study, undergirding the Afrocentric theoretical framework is the philosophy of *Kawaida*. The epistemological significance of *Kawaida* rests in the fact that it is "a communitarian African philosophy created in the context of the African American liberation struggle and developed as an ongoing synthesis of the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world" (Karenga, 2008, p. 1). Significantly, this philosophy seeks to illuminate the best of African culture at a time when the worst of African culture is often placed in broad media circulation globally, exacerbating the identity crisis many African American youth face (Akua, 2012; King, Akua, & Russell, 2013; Powell, 2008).

Kawaida focuses on "culture and community as the twin pillars of its intellectual and practical focus, framework and foundation" (Karenga, 2008, p. 4). *Kawaida* rests on a foundation of African tradition and reason, while employing a "language and logic of liberation" (Karenga, 2008, p. 8). Finally, *Kawaida* does not offer critique without corrective or engage in finger-pointing and blame. Rather, it clearly examines problems and offers practical, workable solutions. As such it is "a philosophy of practice" and a "practice of philosophy" (Karenga, 2008). As a philosophy of practice, it has no room for "armchair revolutionaries" but only those who are consistently engaged in community empowerment. As a practice of philosophy, it suggests that actions must be consciously grounded in a liberatory philosophy. This point is critical, because the state of Black education has produced a generation of scholars who have thoroughly deconstructed the nature of education, schooling, and hegemony. What is needed

now is less deconstruction and more construction. That is what this Afrocentric research study grounded in *Kawaida* epistemology offers.

In 2016, a Google search on the phrase "the education of Black children" produces some 36,400,000 results – an overwhelming indication of the issue's prominence in present-day society. However, the research literature on the education of African American children is replete with deficit-based theories of underachievement (King, 2005), achievement gaps (Perry, Hilliard, & Steele, 2003), and deviant behavior, which often covertly makes it appear that Black children are unsalvageable unless they shed their culture. This led Fenwick to conclude that this "litany of negativity" is "more often than not outright defamatory and libelous" and further, "…much of what masquerades as research about Black people is really defamation" (Fenwick, 2016, p. 589). All too often, Black children are seen as deprived, depraved, and deficient rather than divine, dynamic, and destined for greatness. In addition, Black children remain not only underserved in American schools but under siege (Hilliard, 1997).

An Afrocentric study about policies that shape the education of African American children is long overdue. An Africological research methodology is employed in this case study, which used the method of Afronograpy to collect the data This approach and these two methods are discussed below.

An Africological Methodology

Coined by Winston van Horne, Africology is defined as "the Afrocentric examination of African phenomena related to African people" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 59). The rationale for choosing Africology as a research methodology is grounded in the fact that oftentimes, people of African descent, and the phenomena that affect them, are studied from a Eurocentric frame of reference that poses as universal. Part of the purpose of the Africological methodology

is that it explicitly "centers inquiry on Africa and Africans and seeks to improve life chances of all Africans" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 59).

The Africological approach as a methodology is preferred in this research study because, as the King puts it, "We exist as an African people, an ethnic family. Our perspective must be centered in that reality" (King, 2005, p. 20). In addition, "very little attention has been given to the application of African-centered research frameworks as a process for formulating and constructing research that affects African-descended people" (Davis, 2013, p. 100). While Schiele (2001) has developed an Afrocentric policy analysis framework, it has not been applied to developing an Afrocentric *educational* policy analysis framework.

Another reason the Africological approach as a methodology is preferred and privileged in this study is because many European methodologies are insufficient and inappropriate to study phenomena related to African or Africa-descended people. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has warned that methodologies must be decolonized (2012), because, in her view, "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 1). She further observes, "Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 8). However, ultimately, decolonizing methodologies must conclude with the construction of methodologies that are more authentic in relation to the researcher. First Name Baruti frames this discussion coining the term "eureason," and observing:

> Eureason is the evolving cultural logic behind the eurocentrism of their minds that confuse ours. Eureason sustains and nourishes the spread of the European interpretation of reality by disrupting other cultures' logical thought and infecting them with a world where sanity can only be achieved through the mind of Europe. (Baruti, 2006, p. 14)

Baruti also notes that eureason operates primarily at the subconscious level. Moreover, "it is the continuous search for acceptable rationalizations, for reasoning that paints European behavior as normal and natural for all civilized human beings" (Baruti, 2006, p. 15). Finally, "eureason requires a dismissal of historical effect on the present" (Baruti, 2006, p. 15).

In light of Tuhiwai Smith's and Baruti's insights, Africology as a methodology should not be seen simply as a response to Eurocentric methodologies or eureason. Africology can be seen as the natural methodology of African people had they not been subjected to European hegemony – a methodology that represents "returning to the way." In other words, it is natural for people to operate from a location of being centered in their own culture and reality. Since methodologies emerge out of cultural location, Africology becomes a logical choice.

What makes this research study Africological in character is that part of its research design includes reaching out to the community as a source of information to determine their level of awareness about the policy and the Florida statute being studied. Also, this research study can be viewed from the standpoint of emancipatory empowerment. The community had a voice in explaining its visions about what this legislation was intended to do and what (if anything) it has accomplished. My own positionality as an educator, consultant and researcher is also critical to this study and to the use of the Africological methodology.

The Case Study Method

This research also employed the method of the case study. "The case study starts with the problem, its definition, and the rationale behind the selection of the design" (Heck, 2004, p. 218). "Case studies can consist of either quantitative or qualitative data, as well as combinations of both" (Heck, 2004, p. 218). This policy analysis case study examined how the Florida African American History Legislation came into being, who brought it into being and for what purposes.

This case study examined the Florida legislation in the context of similar African American History laws in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and South Carolina. This qualitative case study used Afronographic data collection methods (discussed below) focused on policy analysis. Heck suggests that researchers who use case study as a method set boundaries or parameters for the study. This is called "bounding the study." Bounding the study can be done by examining purposes either as descriptive, exploratory or explanatory, or any unique combination of any of these. "*Descriptive* cases focus on describing a policy phenomenon, such as the manner in which a policy was developed or implemented" (Heck, 2004, p. 219). "*Exploratory* studies may seek to identify a process…[and] in contrast, *explanatory* cases have as their goal the explanation of why a certain set of events may have occurred – perhaps even identifying a set of causes and effects" (Heck, 2004, p. 218). This study leans more heavily on *exploratory* methods to identify the specific process of how Florida Statute-1003.42(h) was brought into being, followed by *explanatory* methods to examine why this set of events may have occurred in giving birth to this legislation. This type of case study is privileged here in order to gain insight from conscientious community members regarding their understanding of precipitating events and process in constructing emancipatory educational policies.

Ethnography and the Method of Afronography

One of the more accepted methods employed in qualitative research today is ethnography. Fetterman poses ethnography as the "art and science of describing a group or culture" (Fetterman, 1989). Ethnographic research is a method of inquiry aimed at digging deeply into various cultures to determine answers to philosophical questions about why and how things operate within a cultural context. "The ethnographer writes about routine daily lives of

people. The more predictable patterns of human thought and behavior are the focus of inquiry" (Fetterman, 1989).

Expanding upon the discipline of ethnography, this research study employed the method of Afronography. "Afronography is a method of recording and writing the African experience from an Afrocentric perspective" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75). Afrocentricity requires that methods used to examine the lived experiences of African or African-descended people or phenomena that affect their lives must be studied within an Africological context, wherein the researcher is centered in the culture of those being studied. Asante and Mazama observe:

> In many ways, Afronography is akin to what in sociology is called *ethnography* or *case studies*, but Afronography begins from a different place and has objectives that are often at variance with those of ethnography. While ethnography was developed as a Eurocentric way of acquiring information about people other than Europeans, Afronography is a method of gaining access to information about Africans from the standpoint of African culture itself (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 76).

Moreover, Asante and Mazama explain: "Afronography seeks to determine what it is to know something. There are four approaches used by Afronography: historical, experiential, textual, and social" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75). The present study examines the *historical* context that produced this legislation, the *experiential* dimension of African Americans prior to the passing of this legislation, *textual* analysis of documents, and *social* analysis of factors affecting African Americans that made this legislation necessary.

For centuries, research has been conducted at the expense of African, African-descended, and indigenous people. Through "research," millions of people have been "othered" and thus obscured, because the ultimate purposes of those conducting "research" was manipulation and

exploitation (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). It is for this reason that "Afronography seeks to understand the characteristics that accompany certain positions, hence *positionalities*" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75). In addition, it is important to note:

> Afronography is therefore not a system designed to replace Eurocentric analysis for the sake of replacement, but rather a method that seeks to elicit the positionalities, ideas, themes, and information that have always escaped Eurocentric analysis in which Africans are marginalized. (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 76)

This examination of positionalities allows the researcher to re-center the discussion illuminating African people as agents and actors, rather than as objects who are acted upon. The results of using this method are emancipatory in scope since "human freedom from these dehumanizing structures of hegemony is in the balance" (King, 2005, p. 9). Afronography is similar to Tuhiwai Smith's indigenous research agenda, in that it "involves the process of decolonization, transformation, mobilization, and healing" (Roulston, 2010, p. 68). Indeed, as Asante and Mazama point out:

> In its ethical dimension, it [Afronography] is concerned with the nature of what is in the best interest of the African community specifically and the world community generally. The evaluative dimension allows the Afronographer to discern the usefulness of an event, person, or text in the search for truth (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75).

Finally, Asante and Mazama also note, "All academic disciplines are grounded in values – which may be articulated and recognized openly or hidden and suppressed in claims of value neutrality – and serve a range of interests and purposes" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 60). Afronography, as a method, then, allows the researcher to be overtly centered in African reality and values.

In addition, orientation to data is critical in Afrocentricity and thus, Afronography. "Afrocentricity is not data, but the orientation to data. It is how we approach phenomena" (Asante, 2007, p. 49). How issues are perceived and analyzed is paramount for the Afrocentrist and Afronographer. Asante further observes, "If you do not approach the data correctly, then you are prone to poor conclusions" (Asante, 2007, p. 48). In this study, great care was taken to approach the data from documents and interviews from within an Africological perspective:

1. What is the socio-cultural and political context that precipitated the drafting of this legislation?
2. What was it expected to change with regard to culture in education?
3. Who were the major agents and actors who brought this legislation into being and *what was the vision of those who participated in its drafting*? Was the community involved in the process? If so, was Afrocentric agency demonstrated? If so, in what ways?
4. What specific steps were taken to bring the legislation into being and with what consequences (both intended and unintended)?

Research Context

H. L. Goodall has observed that qualitative inquiry requires a context. "No one…can make sense of behavior until and unless that behavior is situated within a scene…Unless the writer provides context details, we are left without the narrative resources to make sense of the behavior" (Goodall, 2008, p. 43). As stated earlier, the context of this study comes at a time of high-stakes testing, scripted curricula, savage inequalities, wholesale dismantling of public education with a thrust toward privatization of public schools and the emergence of more and more charter schools. Attention has turned away from many of the demands made by ACE activists and turned toward Common Core Standards. It is an education that appears to be more

and more irrelevant amid sweeping economic changes that have shifted the locus of power further away from those who need it most. This study illuminates areas of agency that African American educators, parents, community activists, and scholar activists can lay hold of to advance the cause of quality, equitable, and culturally affirming education for African American children and all children.

Negotiating Entry

In choosing to conduct this study, the principal researcher draws on an extensive history of professional experience with the Florida Black History Legislation. Since 2005, I have provided consulting services to the Florida Education Commissioner's Task Force on African American History. I was invited to present at several of their state-wide Task Force conferences and subsequently to consult with several school districts in Florida including Leon County in North Florida, Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade in South Florida and Madison County in Central Florida. In addition, the Task Force purchased my materials, paid honorariums and also contracted me to craft and create online professional development for the Task Force to utilize with K-12 teachers state-wide so that they may be in compliance with Florida Statute-1003.42(h) relative to the infusion of African and Africa American history across the curriculum. The two online modules I created were entitled "African Beginnings" (2008) and "The Middle Passage" (2012) (See Appendix A: Personal Disclosure Interview).

Because of my professional relationship with the Task Force, I know the Chair of the Task Force and many of those who are or were on the Task Force. When I indicated an interest several years ago in studying how this legislation came into being, they were all interested in putting me in contact with the legislators who were instrumental in its construction and conception. In addition, several community activists were eager to share how the community

was involved in raising it as a concern and how they are still fighting for its full implementation. Thus, a range of stakeholders was identified and interviewed for this study.

Participants in the Study

It is helpful and relevant to know the backgrounds of the agents and actors involved in the formulation of Florida Statute 1003.42(h). The following informants were chosen to be interviewed based on their occupation, civic service, experience, and positionality as central to this study. Table 1 provides a list and brief biographical background of those interviewed in this study.

Table 1: Participants

Respondent	Race/Gender	Background
1. Representative Frederica Wilson	African American Female	Rep. Frederica Wilson served in the U.S. Congress (dates). Prior to her service in Congress, she was a teacher and principal. She served as a Florida State Representative, then a State Senator. Her interest in education fueled her service on the African American History Task Force (dates), where she could structure and execute the implementation of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) in schools throughout the state.
2. Represenative Rudy Bradley	African American Male	Rep. Rudy Bradley of St. Petersburg, FL, served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1994-2000. Rep. Bradley was one of the principle legislators responsible for sponsoring the African American History Legislation.
3. Senator Jim Hargrett	African American Male	Sen. Jim Hargrett of Tampa, FL, served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1982-1992 and the Florida Senate from 1992-2000. His great-grandfather, Amos Hargrett, was very active in social, civic, and political affairs, being a member of the 1885 Constitutional Convention in Florida. Sen. Hargrett was one of the principal legislators responsible for sponsoring the African American History Legislation.

4. Dr. Bernadette Kelley	African American Female	Dr. Bernadette Kelley has served with distinction as Chair of the African American History Task Force from 2000-2016. She is also the Principal Investigator of the grants the Task Force receives to implement the legislation in Florida's schools. In addition, Dr. Kelley is a professor in the Florida Agricultural &Mechanical University (FAMU) School of Education, where her focus is on educational and instructional technology.
5. Terry Emeka Thomas	African American Male	Terry Emeka Thomas was an educator at the time of and leading up to the time when the Florida Statute 1003.42(h) was drafted. He taught Fine Arts and Journalism at Lakeshore Middle School and his efforts at infusing African and African American history into the curriculum through an annual and extensive Black History and Cultural Arts festival were commended by the state. He was also the president of the Black Caucus of the National Education Association, Florida state affiliate, where he helped to organize and strategize around the drafting and passing of Florida Statute 1003.42(h).
6. Debbye Raing	African American Female	Debbye Raing worked in the Palm Beach School District's Office of Multicultural Education with the ESOL Program at the time of and leading up to Florida Statute 1003.42(h) being drafted. She was the Project Director and Program Planner for Professional Development. Her background as an educator is in English, speech, and journalism. After the legislation passed, she was appointed Program Planner and Director of the Department of African American Studies in Palm Beach School District. Her responsibilities were "to supervise the process of researching, writing and developing curriculum units and lesson plans, creating a community involvement plan and professional staff development opportunities" (*Palm Beach African American Studies Curriculum Guide*).

		Raing also served on the African American History Task Force after the legislation was passed.
7. Dr. Molefi Asante	African American Male	Dr. Molefi Asante is a pioneering Professor of Africology and African American Studies at Temple University and the scholar responsible for operationalizing the theory of Afrocentricity as a tool for intellectual inquiry.

Molefi Asante is included among the interview respondents because his theory of Afrocentricity is the theoretical perspective that undergirds this study and he was heavily involved in speaking to school districts about infusing African American content into the curriculum. The questions I asked during his interview are as follows:

1. What was the social and cultural context that precipitated your formulation of the theory of Afrocentricity?
2. How has the theory of Afrocentricity changed the national conversation relative to Blacks in education?
3. Do you think Afrocentricity as a theoretical concept has had an impact on the formulation of the African American History Legislation in Florida and in other places, if so, how?
4. What do you think is the most critical work that needs to be done in educational policy with regard to making public schools more relevant to the nature and needs of the African American students?
5. What indications as evidence of Afrocentric agency do you think that I should look for as I examine how the Florida Legislation was brought into being and as I interview other people who were instrumental in that?

6. What criteria would be important for assessing the implementation and impacts of the African American History Legislation? How would we know when it has impact?

Participant Recruitment and Selection

My personal acquaintance and long working collegial relationship with Dr. Bernadette Kelley, the chairperson of the Florida Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force, was invaluable to this study. Dr. Kelley was instrumental in my work as a consultant with the African American History Task Force from 2006-2016 (See Appendix A, Personal Disclosure Interview). Dr. Kelley, who has chaired the Task Force since 2000, has been a professor at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) since 2005. Because Dr. Kelley saw the bill from inception to implementation, she was an excellent candidate to interview for the research study. Dr. Kelley helped me to identify other potential participants. To identify and contact respondents for this study I also made calls and sent emails to Dr. Kelley's assistant

Regrettably, the former Commissioner, Doug Jamerson, who helped raise the legislation in 1994, passed away in 2001. However, former State Representative Rudolph Bradley and former State Senator Jim Hargrett, who worked closely with Commissioner Jamerson on the legislation, were contacted and agreed to be interviewed.

In addition to these key figures, I used other personal and professional connections to complete the core group of potential candidates to interview for this study. Using this snowball technique to identify interviewees, I sought a balanced perspective, with viewpoints ranging from broad-based Black community input to the African American History legislation and legislative members most directly involved with the statute itself.

Confidentiality

The identity of those interviewed is relevant to this study; however, the identities have been disclosed only with their permission. Using member checks (Roulston, 1987, p. 87) after the interview, respondents were allowed to identify any parts of their interview that they wished to omit, and they had the opportunity to choose to remain anonymous.

The Role of the Researcher

This study has no illusions of objectivity. As a matter of fact, it is necessarily subjective, in keeping with the tenets of the method of Afronography. As Baruti has observed, "western scientists argue that to be objective is to engage in unbiased, rational thinking, to consciously operate as if there is no opinion or politics involved in the questions asked or answers gathered" (Baruti, 2006, p. 17). Further, "since science is a product of human beings, it can never be absolutely objective because the human element will always be present. And humans are invariably biased" (Baruti, 2006, p. 18). Moreover, "meaningful scientific questions are always dictated by the needs of the people and answered in ways that directly serve them. In this respect, science cannot help, at least in its preliminary questions, but be subjective" (Baruti, 2006, p. 19).

For the entirety of my over twenty-year career as an educator – eleven years as a public school language arts teacher, three years as a Title I Reading Specialist and Reading Teacher, and ten years as a national and international educational consultant with Imani Enterprises and the Teacher Transformation Institute – I have argued that culture is the key to increasing academic and cultural excellence in African American students. In my own experience as a teacher, I have seen students literally go from F's to A's in my language arts class and other classes due to their immersion in African and African American history and culture and the

African-centered and multicultural pedagogical methods that I and other colleagues have employed (Akua, 2012).

My own personal subjectivities notwithstanding, there is much to be gained by bringing my lived experiences to this research study. My experience as an educator and educational consultant who has worked with students in one capacity or another from Pre-K to doctoral level and with parents and community members can lend a level of insight into the structure and design of the study and an authentic Africological interpretation of the data collected. This means that African people are not only centered in this inquiry, but that African people can potentially benefit from the knowledge of how legislation raised for their benefit can be duplicated in other areas of educational and public policy to meet the needs of the African American community. The ethical considerations discussed below are also related in some ways to my positionality with respect to this inquiry and my professional identity and commitments as an Afrocentric educator.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for this study include being aware of sensitive information that legislators and members of the Task Force were willing to share, but may not want publicized. There may be political and professional implications and aspirations hanging in the balance; consequently, respondents were asked to be very clear about what may or may not be publicized, including their personal identification and personal communications with legislative and political officers.

I have been contracted to provide services and materials to the Task Force over the years. Obviously, in certain circles of the community and the public school system, my work is known. This could be perceived as a conflict of interest. I did not know or meet the legislators I

interviewed prior to interviewing them. My positionality as a researcher gave me access and insights that allowed me to get to those I regarded as the people who could provide the data I needed to answer my research questions. (See Appendix XX…..)

Data Collection

Afronography is "recording and writing the African experience from an Afrocentric perspective" (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 75). Data collection was Afronographic, by conducting interviews and analyzing documents to identify if and where African American agency and action was operational in the formulation of this policy.

Through document analysis and interviews with educators, state legislators, and African American History Task Force members who were involved in the drafting of the legislation or implementation of the legislation, this study attempted to reveal the events leading up to its drafting, the agents and actors involved in making the legislation possible, the purpose of the legislation relative to culture and education, and the challenges of drafting and passing the legislation. The following documents were examined: 1)*Tampa Bay Times*: Hillsborough school district to enhance Black history lessons; 2) FAMUNews.com: FAMU professor appointed to Task Force on African American History; 3)*The Tampa Tribune-Times*: Families discover forebears who held office in Florida; 4) The School District of Palm Beach County African and African American History Infusion Curriculum; 5)*Orlando Sentinel*: Schools fail mandate on Black history, panel says; 6) State of Florida Commissioner of Education's Task Force on African American History website. However, all of these listed documents did not provide the data I was seeking. Therefore, only selected documents are reviewed.

I interviewed seven respondents for this study. Six were involved in the Florida legislations. The seventh, Dr. Asante, is an Afrocentric scholar. Each interview lasted about an

hour. The interviews were conducted by telephone, electronically recorded, transcribed, and archived until formal analytical procedures began. I also identified and copied relevant public documents such as newspaper articles and relevant websites for review, including the Task Force website.

Data Analysis Procedures

Using the Afrocentric paradigm (Mazama, 2003), the data analysis procedures centered identifying indicators of African and African American people as agents and actors in the context of the data being examined. The use of documents in research can lend insight into phenomena being studied. Documents "are constructed in accordance with certain rules, they express a structure, they are nestled within a specific discourse, and their presence in the world depends on collective organized action" (Prior, 2013, pp. 12-13). I used thematic coding in the analysis of the data—the documents and the interviews--which focused on extrapolating patterns of emancipatory thought, activism, agency, coalition building, community engagement, and barriers to progress in the process of implementing the Florida statute under study. I identified elements in the documents and themes in the interview data, which I compared with the Afrocentric canons (categories of knowledge) Reviere (2001).

Africological methodology categorizes knowledge utilizing five Afrocentric canons that Reviere (2001) identifies (in the Swahili language) as: *Ukweli* (Truth), *Utulivu* (Justice), *Uhaki* (Harmony), *Ujamaa* (Familyhood), and *Kujitoa* (Devoted). "Any inquiry must satisfy these five canons to be legitimate" (p. 710) as Afrocentric research. I used these five Afrocentric canons as benchmarks to give this research authenticity or Africological legitimacy. Thus, they functioned as a heuristic tool, that is, as criterion indicators to keep my focus on identifying and illuminating any examples of Afrocentric agency. Using the canons in this way ensured that Afrocentric

values guided the inquiry. These criteria, explained below in Table 2, centered this research study in Afrocentric philosophy, values, and interests.

Table 2: The Afrocentric Canon

Afrocentric Canon	**Meaning**
Ukweli	Literally means, "truth" in Swahili, but refers to the authentic "groundedness of research in the experiences of the community" (Reviere, 2001, p. 713). So often, community truths and perspectives have been hidden, suppressed or rejected.
Utulivu	"the concept of justice is required for legitimate research" (Reviere, 2001, p. 717); "how community input is crucial to research in determining what is accurate" (See also: http://culturalassimilation.weebly.com/kujitoa–ukweli.html)
Uhaki	Literally means, "harmony" in Swahili; "requires a research procedure that is fair to all participants, especially those being researched" (Reviere, 2001, p. 725). Often in the past, African people have been victims in and of research in which they were mischaracterized, defamed and de-centered. Uhaki requires that the researcher be in harmony with the humanity of those being studied.
Ujamaa	"recognition and maintenance of community"; "theory and practice should be informed by the actual and aspired interests of the community" (Reviere, 2001, p. 725).
Kujitoa	Literally means, "devotion" in Swahili, but refers to the requirement "that the researcher emphasize considerations of how knowledge is structured and used" (Reviere, 2001, p. 716). The researcher must be *devoted* to this process of structuring knowledge that is accessible for consumption by the community.

Lastly, for the sake of readability, the interview data are presented narratively to facilitate ease of reading and assimilation of the information. The responses to the interview questions are presented in italics and bold font is used to make it easier to locate the emerging themes in the responses of the participants. This is in keeping with the Afrocentric canon of *Kujitoa* (devoted), which "requires that the researcher emphasize considerations of how knowledge is structured and used" (Reviere, 2001, p. 716).

Dissemination of the Results

The dissemination of the results has tremendous implications for community action and advancement among African Americans and all Americans. In the tradition of African-centered scholar activists (Karenga, 2002) who were consciously rooted in the community and the academy, I intend to share the research findings of this study at community events, create audio and video productions of findings to inform possible similar legislation in Georgia, and showcase the Florida legislation as a national model that should be implemented in every state. In addition, this study lends itself to being shared in peer-reviewed journals and at scholarly conferences. In a word, this study could help to pick up where the African American infusion scholars left off, continuing their seminal work. That is my responsibility as an Afrocentric educator and scholar.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study focused on the formulation of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) and several factors relevant to its drafting and passing. This research examined the socio-cultural context [what was happening in Black America and American, in general] that precipitated the drafting and passing of this legislation, and what the policy was expected to change with regard to culture and education. In addition, it examined who the major agents and actors were who bought this legislation into being, how the community was involved, and the specific steps taken to bring this legislation into being. Lastly, this research study examined the intended and unintended consequences of the legislation. It sought to uncover acts of Afrocentric agency among the agents and actors responsible for its drafting.

In general, the policy process is not neat and tidy. It is not a seamless set of ideas and actions formulated into a policy. It is often a dynamic and organic process of conflict and contention, collaboration and collusion, amid controversy as people position themselves to make certain policies a priority (Wilson, 1998). Strategic alliances and allegiances to people, politicians, political organizations, and economic interests all figure into the policy-making process (Wilson, 1998).

The results of the individual interviews are presented as a synthesis of the answers to the five key interview questions. The results of the document analysis are framed by the Afrocentric canon.

Reviere observes, "an Afrocentric inquiry must be executed from a clearly defined Afrocentric place and must include a clear description of this location" (Reviere, 2001, p. 712). Bankole argues, "Afrocentric research methodology continues to ask critical questions of African phenomena and to categorize knowledge to reflect African agency" (Bankole, 2006, p. 684).

Document Analysis Data

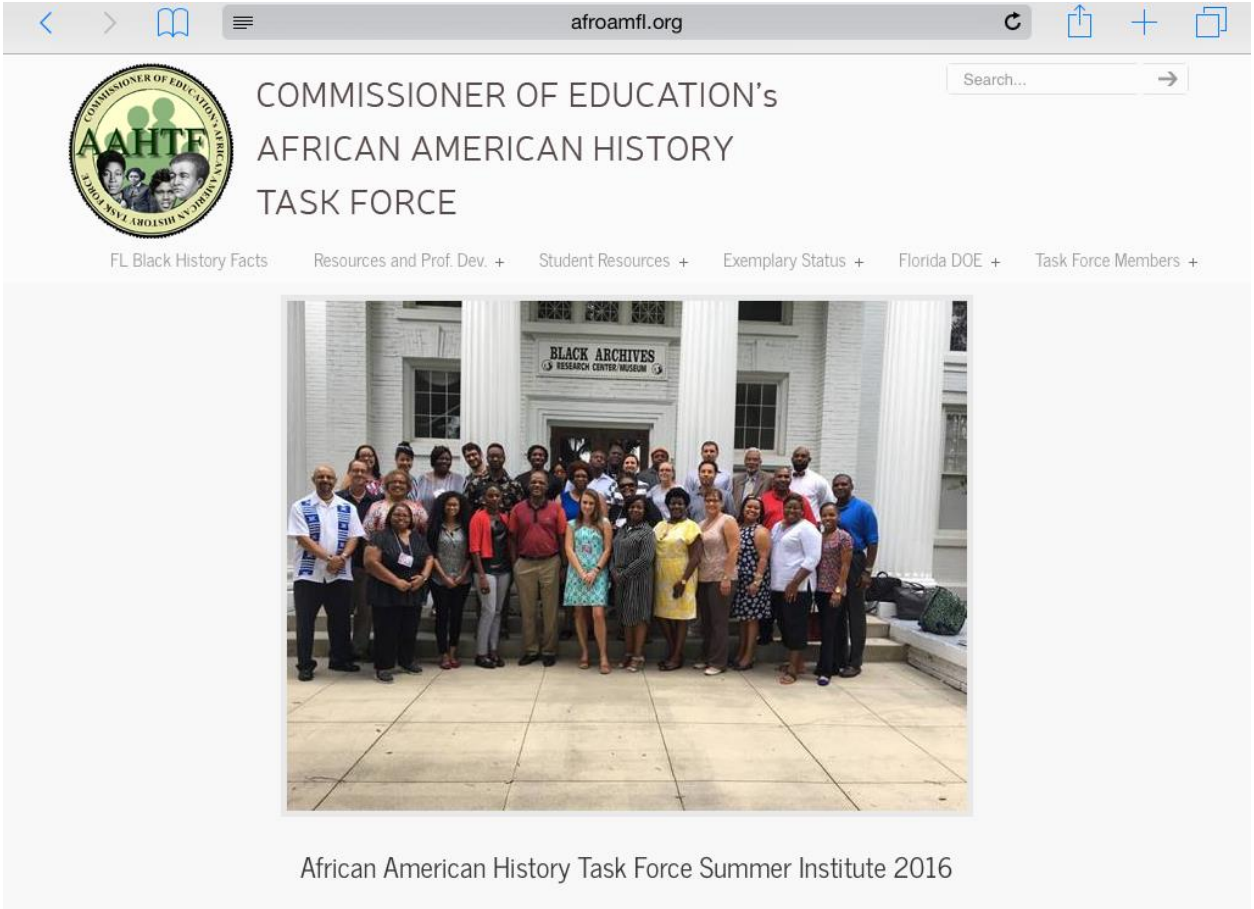
This section provides a listing and a discussion of the documents reviewed for this study. The following documents were reviewed: 1)*Tampa Bay Times*: Hillsborough school district to enhance Black history lessons; 2) FAMUNews.com: FAMU professor appointed to Task Force on African American History; 3)*The Tampa Tribune-Times*: Families discover forebears who held office in Florida; 4) The School District of Palm Beach County African and African American History Infusion Curriculum; 5)*Orlando Sentinel*: Schools fail mandate on Black history, panel says; 6) State of Florida Commissioner of Education's Task Force on African American History website. However, all of these listed documents did not provide the data I was seeking. Below, I will discuss the documents that did provide data I was looking for that was essential to this research study.

In seeking to determine the socio-cultural context in which Florida Statute 1003.42(h) was formulated, in an article entitled "Schools fail Black history mandate, panel says," Weber notes in this *Orlando Sentinel* article, "Blacks pushed for the law under former Gov. Lawton Chiles, saying African American students often lack a sense of their culture's place in America's development because it is overlooked in school." In addition, "token' Black History Month observances in the schools each month" were insufficient to meet the needs of African American students. In a 2008 speech to the Wakulla County Christian Coalition, Senator Jim Hargrett says about the Florida African American History Legislation, "I argued that you could not understand the history of Florida and the nation without understanding the history of African Americans."

The State of Florida Commissioner of Education's Task Force on African American History is an important body of people organized and appointed to oversee the implementation of

Florida Statute 1003.42(h) – the infusion of African American history across the curriculum. As such, the Task Force website, is an important document for critical analysis (http://afroamfl.org/). It is the face of the Task Force as seen by the public. Using thematic coding, analysis of the data focused on extrapolating patterns of emancipatory thought, activism, agency, coalition building, community engagement, and barriers to progress in the process of implementing the Florida statute under study.

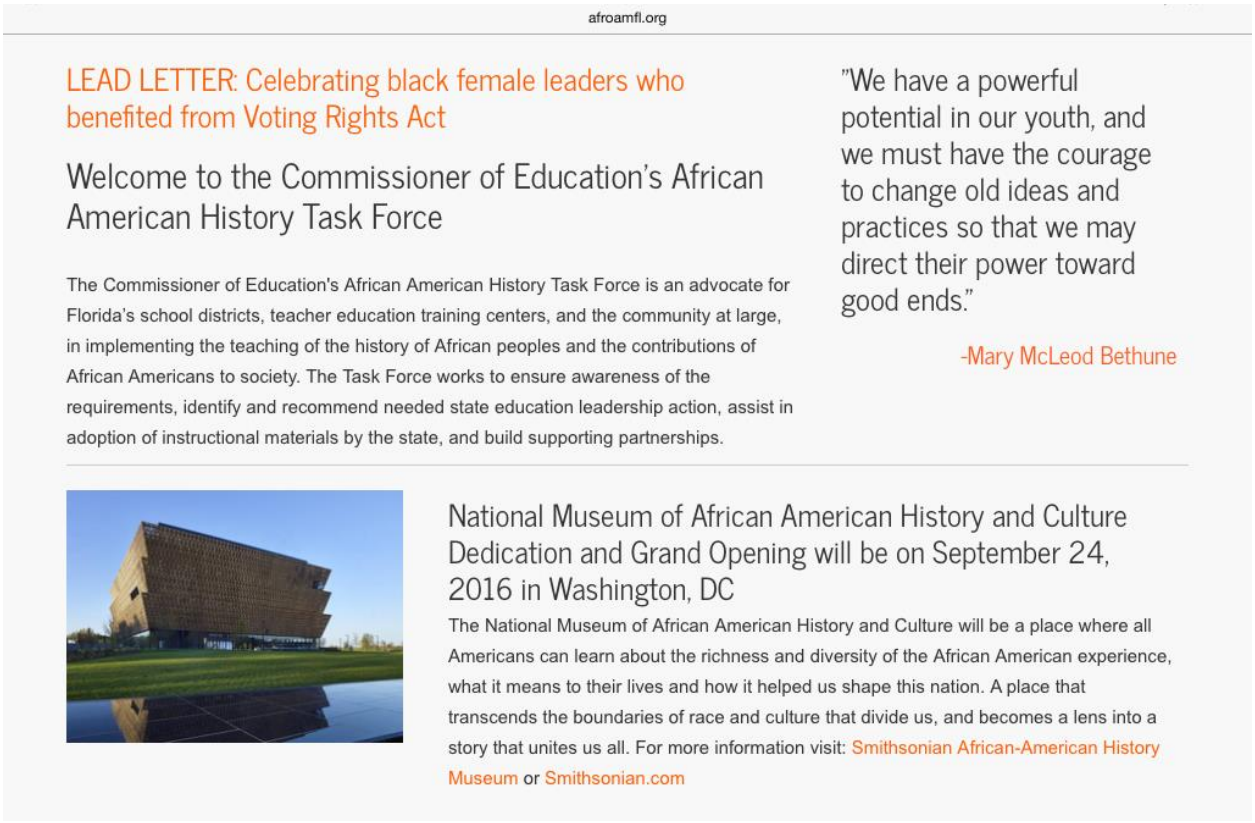
Figure 1: Florida African American History Task Force Website



As indicated by the front page of the Task Force website, "The Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force is an advocate for Florida's school districts, teacher education training centers, and the community at large in implementing the teaching of the history of African peoples and the contributions African Americans to society" (Figure 1)

The drop-down tabs on the horizontal homepage menu include in this order from left to right: FL Black History Facts, Resources and Prof Development, Student Resources, Exemplary Status, Florida DOE, and Task Force Members. Below this menu is a picture of educators who participated in the 2016 African America History Task Force Summer Institute standing in front of the FAMU Black Archives Research Center and Museum.

Figure 2: Florida African American History Task Force Website



Below the picture of the Summer Institute participants is a welcome message and a quote from Mary McLeod Bethune, who founded what would become Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida. The quote reads, "We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power

toward good ends." Below this quote is a picture of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture with information about the dedication which took place on September 24, 2016.

The website states the Task Force mission and goals: "The State of Florida's African American History Task Force works to ensure awareness of the requirements, identify and recommend needed state education leadership action, assist in adoption of instructional materials by the state, and build supporting partnerships."

The drop-down tabs on the menu begin with FL Black History. When this tab is clicked, a list and very brief bio of 22 Florida "Black Firsts" appears with notables such as Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs, the first African American to serve on the Florida Cabinet, when he was chosen as Secretary of State in 1868. Then, as Superintendent of Public Instruction [Secretary of Education] in 1873, he established the state's first public school system (http://afroamfl.org/?page_id=1172).

The next tab on the menu is Resources and Professional Development. Under this tab there are: the AAHTF Instructional Guide, African American Museums (in Florida and throughout the U.S.), an online professional development platform called "306 African American History," and Video Resources, which contains two brief clips, one of actress Alfre Woodard speaking about Whitney Young, and another about Lavon Bracy, the first Black person to integrate Gainesville, Florida public schools.

The Instructional Standards Guide can be downloaded. It contains a framework for infusing African American history with lesson plans. Before the lesson plans is a text headed "Perspective on African American History Framework." It reads:

The study of African Americans' contributions to the culture of the United States and the world as it concerns African Americans' participation in improving the political, economic, and social development of humanity.

A close scrutiny of the Florida Statute 1003.42 (h) requires instructions in the history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples, and emphasis on the teaching of ancient African history and connections to African Americans.

However, the model, which follows, clearly points to fact that ancient African history surpassed slavery and post slavery. It provides a positive set of information indicating that Ancient Africans were developed and civilized peoples who created complex and sophisticated societies…

There are 7 major curriculum foci in the teaching of African American History, namely:

1) Ancient Africa: Pre-Columbus

2) African Explorations of the World: Pre Columbus

3) Invasions and weakening of Africa: European Colonialism

4) Slavery in the Americas: Post Columbus

5) Neo-Slavery: Abolition, Civil Rights and constitutional Rights

6) The soul of African Americans, and

7) Contributions of African Americans to the United States of America and to the World (emphasis mine) (http://afroamfl.org/?page_id=164, p. 6).

While the website contains valuable information and is a rich resource for educators interested in African American history and the work of the Task Force, a careful review of the website yielded only two items that led me to answers for my research questions. When one

clicks on the Florida DOE tab, then clicks on Florida Statute (which is the first option), then Florida Statute 1003.42(h) appears on the screen. Beneath it are two brief video clips – one of former State Rep. Rudy Bradley and former State Sen. Jim Hargrett explaining the significance of the African American History Legislation and why they sponsored the legislation in the Florida State House and Senate (http://afroamfl.org/?page_id=232). Regrettably, the videos are no longer active on the site, but the videos were active when I began this study. Seeing those two brief video clips (each about 60 to 90 seconds in length), along with the recommendation from the Task Force Chair, Dr. Bernadette Kelley, made me decide to try to contact these two key former legislators for an interview.

The overriding themes that arose from my review of the Task Force website were *organization and implementation*. The members of the Task Force organized knowledge relative and relevant to the African American History Legislation. The language of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) is articulated and explicated so that the reader understands exactly what the law says and what it means. Then there is specific information relative to the successful implementation of the African American History Legislation. The analysis of The State of Florida Commissioner's Task Force on African American History website indicate that the Task Force succeeded in setting forth a comprehensive set of benchmarks relative to achieving compliance with the African American history legislation. The benchmarks include 1) School board approval of the African American History Initiative; 2) Structured professional development; 3) African American Studies Curriculum; 4) Structured teaching of the African American History Curriculum; 5) University-School district collaboration; 6) Parent/Community partnerships.

My review of the website and other documents, yielded no insights into the socio-cultural context that precipitated the drafting and passing of the African American History Legislation or

what the law was expected to change with regard to culture and education. However, by way of two brief video clips, the website did provide brief insight into the thinking of two of the principal agents/actors who brought the legislation into being, State Representative Rudy Bradley and State Senator Jim Hargrett, both of whom I interviewed. My review of the documents did not reveal any data on what steps were taken to bring the legislation into being or its intended and unintended consequences.

The information on the website is strategically organized for mass consumption. While professional language is used in some instances, it is not prohibitive to being understood by the community, in general. The purpose of this organization of information is ultimately for the successful implementation of Florida Statute 1003.42(h). The website indicates that successful district-wide implementation includes the following characteristics, thereby making it "exemplary": school board approval of the initiative, structured professional development, an African American Studies curriculum, structured teaching of the African American Studies curriculum, university-school district collaboration and parent/community partnerships (http://afroamfl.org/criteria-for-exemplary-status/).

My review of the Task Force website reveals that the information and resources it contains are consistent with the elements of the Afrocentric Canons at work. The website exemplifies a quality of the Afrocentric canon *Ukweli,* which focuses on being authentically grounded in the community. This also satisfies the canon of *Kujitoa,* which means devoted, emphasizes that how knowledge is structured should be considered. The website is structured for broad consumption of knowledge and is a rich and relevant resource for all stakeholders. As indicated above, the website is structured to be a resource not only for K-12 schools and the academy, but also for the community. Structuring the website in this way is consistent with the

purpose of *Utulivu*, which requires that the justice is required for legitimate research. The Task Force privileges justice and provides the information resources necessary so that justice can be done in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.42(h) for those who are interested.

The Afrocentric canon of *Uhaki* requires harmony. The Task Force website demonstrates harmony in that it shows how African American historical content can be harmoniously infused into the curriculum in such a way that it does not necessarily conflict with other historical narratives, but can also serve to add breadth and depth to the curriculum along with perspectives heretofore missing. The Afrocentric canon of *Ujamaa* or familyhood requires the maintenance of community. Maintenance connotes not just commencement but continuation. The Task Force website contains information which allows for the process of infusion to *begin*, but also to *continue* to the work of curricular infusion with links to other relevant websites, museums, articles, etc. Thus, the website can be considered to embody important principles of Afrocentricity.

Interview Data

The research findings in this study are organized and presented as a synthesis of the answers to the interview questions. In reviewing the transcripts of the interviews, several themes emerged from the informants' responses. Open coding was used to determine what themes emerged. Within this study, I was concerned with illuminating elements of change that could lead to improving the life chances of African American students in the public school system by prioritizing policies that create curricula that properly represents African and African American views, values, accomplishments, and contributions. In this presentation of the findings, I move back and forth between the emerging themes that I identified and the elements of the Afrocentric canon. Table 3 below presents the themes that emerged from the interview data in relation to a

relevant Afrocentric canon, which I used as a lens to organize this presentation of the findings from the interviews that emerged as themes.

Table 3: An Afrocentric Analytical Framework

Interview Question	Emerging Themes	Canon
1. What is the socio-cultural context that precipitated the drafting and passing of the African American History Legislation in 1994?	Inaccuracy & Omission	*Ukweli* Truth
2. What was the policy expected to change with regard to culture and education?	Correction & Inclusion	*Utulivu* Justice
3. Who were the major agents and actors who brought this legislation into being? Was the Black community involved in the process? If so, was (Afrocentric) agency demonstrated? If so, in what ways?	Consciousness & Competence	*Uhaki* Harmony
4. What specific steps were taken to bring this legislation into being and with what consequences (both intended and unintended)?	Policy & Priority	*Ujamaa* Familyhood
5. Summation of Interview Questions	Power & Precedence	*Kujitoa* Devoted

The first theme that emerged with the answers to the first interview question is ***inaccuracy and omission***. The respondents indicated that in Florida school textbooks and K-12 curriculum, historical narratives were inaccurate and African and African American historical and cultural contributions and perspectives had been omitted from the curriculum.

1. **What is the socio-cultural context that precipitated the drafting and passing of the African American History Legislation in 1994?**

Representative Frederica Wilson, a former teacher and administrator, observed: *"Up until this point in time, textbooks presented a history of America to my students that told a story through one lens."* It was *"a story that primarily relied on the historical perspective of the dominant group in America and how events unraveled according to this group's attitudes and*

beliefs." Rep. Wilson indicated that there was a long history of curriculum created to be relatable to the dominant group in America rather than those of "oppressed populations."

In light of this and other factors, **Representative Rudy Bradley** argued that the Anglo historical perspective was stunting the academic growth and achievement of African American students and all students: *"I thought that it was important, number one, for all students to clearly understand the significant contribution for everyone who resides in America because America is a very unique country…"* He further observed, *"One of the things that became apparent to me was that the self-esteem of African American students, in particular, had been adversely impacted because they had no true information about the richness of their origin and they had no clear understanding about what the significance is or was about their journey into America."*

Senator Jim Hargrett determined that the teaching of African American history was relegated to the month of February the way Blacks and other marginalized groups were relegated to the ghetto. "*I felt that history was not being accurately taught and the history of African Americans needed to be taught throughout the year and not just reserved for a month where it had a few names mentioned.*"

Debbye Raing observed that the socio-cultural context that precipitated the passing of the African American history legislation was influenced by lawsuits throughout the U.S., including one in Florida in 1990, in which students coming from countries where English was not the first language did not have access to proper educational resources and materials. The law was called the Florida Consent Decree. A consent decree is a settlement or agreement to resolve a dispute without admission of guilt or liability. So, in effect, Florida's Consent Decree was a way of indirectly recognizing that the needs of ESOL students were not being met and put the decree in place to reach an agreement with the parties who raised the complaint.

Raing was working as a specialist in the School District of Palm Beach's ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) Program. She created professional development for teachers of ESOL students. According to the Palm Beach School District where she worked,

> In August, 1990, a judge of the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida, signed a Consent Decree giving the Court the power to enforce an agreement between the Florida State Board of Education and a coalition of eight groups represented by Multicultural Education, Training and Advocacy, Inc. (META), and Florida legal services attorneys regarding the identification and provision of services to students whose native language is other than English. The plaintiff organizations involved in the case represented a broad spectrum of the civil rights/educational community. They are: League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), ASPIRA of Florida, The Farm Workers' Association of Central Florida, Florida State Conference of NAACP Branches, Haitian Refugee Center, Spanish American League Against Discrimination (SALAD), American Hispanic Educators' Association of Dade (AHEAD), Haitian Educators' Association (http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/Portals/195/assets/doc/ESOL/Parent%20Info/ESOLMETAConsentSummary.pdf).

The Consent Decree settlement terms focus on the following six issues:

I. Identification and assessment

II. Equal access to appropriate programming

III. Equal access to appropriate categorical and other programming for English Language Learners (ELLs)

IV. IV. Personnel

V. Monitoring

VI. Outcome measures

According to Raing, the Florida consent decree set the socio-cultural context for the African American History Legislation. Raing explains,

> *…it wasn't just Hispanic students or not Hispanics so much but students who came in who spoke the languages of their countries, whether it was from Latin America, South America, Spain, wherever, but there were also students coming in from the country of* ***Haiti who were from African descent, students coming in from the Dominican Republic who also spoke Spanish and English. And then we had students coming in from the continent of Africa who spoke different languages and they had started taking courses to be proficient in the language, but they were not proficient in English at that time.*** *And so equal access did not only include concerns about instructional material; it included the print and non-print resources for the school district.*

Because of this influx of students, many from the African diaspora, she notes, *"We had to look at cultural competence, we just had to look at how we viewed each other and mostly what was happening out of lack of knowledge and, in many cases, ignorance and, in a whole lot of cases, racism."*

Raing also noted that the push for inclusion of African and African American history was not new but actually preceded the 1994 legislation. She broadened the cultural context and the chronological scope of the legislation, connecting it to a much longer, almost century-long struggle going back to 1905:

This legislation goes back to before the National Teachers Organization when it was just – they called it 'Colored' *then – and they were pushing at that time back in 1905 for the history of Black people to be taught honestly and efficiently like they taught the history of the United States and the history of the European. So it's been like an ongoing fight but every year it was not being pushed to be a law. So you had some key people who were involved especially in the integration of schools and integration of subject matter.*

Raing also indicated that some more contemporary legislators were pushing for similar legislation:

[U.S. Rep.] Carrie Meek... helped lay the ground work for that; she was in the Florida Legislature from 1979 to 1983 and during all that time they were not able to get it passed but she helped lay that ground work, and so when she went to the United States Congress, she was then able to feed information back to help those who were still working on this project.

In terms of the context that precipitated the drafting and passing of the African American History Legislation, educator **Terry Emeka Thomas** had concerns that the little bit that was taught about African American history was *"watered down into a history about slavery."* He further indicated that the experience of African people does not begin with the slavery experience.

The theme of inaccuracy and omission reveals the respondents' understanding that the curricular inaccuracies and omissions are harmful to African American students and all students. The Afrocentric canon of *ukweli* indicates that research must be grounded "in the experiences of the community" (Reviere, 2001, p. 713). By the testimony of the respondents, the educational experiences of the community were grounded in curricular inaccuracy and cultural omission.

2. What was the policy expected to change with regard to culture and education?

The second theme that emerged in the data in conjunction with the second question is ***correction and inclusion***. The respondents expressed a strong belief that the history books and books in other disciplines could be corrected and re-written to be inclusive of the accomplishments, contribution, views, and perspectives of African Americans and other marginalized populations. Additionally, teachers' understanding about this content and teaching methods could be corrected and be inclusive of the African American experience along with that of other marginalized groups.

Rep. Frederica Wilson indicated,

> *"The classroom is a major vehicle for cultural transmission. We intended this legislation to truly transform the approach that Florida schools took to America's history. The goal was to expand the curriculum to cover more of how African Americans directly contributed to what America is today."*

This statement indicates the prime importance the classroom holds in the process of intergenerational cultural transmission and that the curriculum must be inclusive of what African people have brought to America and how their culture and contributions have enriched America.

Rep. Rudy Bradley explained,

> *"It was expected that by teaching African American history, others would gather a better and clearer understanding of the significance of our presence in this country, the significance of our contributions in this country and the significance of African Americans, in general, and also change the perception of who African Americans are. Too much of an emphasis is placed upon the negative perceptions that people have of us based on how we are projected in the media. . ."*

These statements suggest that with correction and inclusion, it would not only change the way African Americans understand themselves, it would change the way America understands African Americans. This legislation is an example of the potential of policy to change perception.

Senator Jim Hargrett explained that the legislation was supposed to *"empower kids with accurate history and also to be a morale booster for African Americans to understand history of their forefathers and what contributions they made to Florida."*

Debbye Raing observed a tremendous shift in attitudes and pride in the Black community. Here observations are worth including at length:

> *. . .[W]hen you talk about policy making a change – first, the pride people felt, it was like, okay, my story gets to be told. And when you look at that type of a change agent coming in, it helps bolster your self-esteem because when you look at us as a people, we have a history of not appreciating who we are, not liking who we are.*
>
> *And so we had to also get across to people who didn't like who they are or where they came from or who* **denied** *who they are or where they came from, you know, we are victorious, glorious, smart, knowledgeable and adventurous people – which a lot of people didn't know. So it really afforded us an opportunity to impart a lot of information in our community and around the state about who we were that was left out of the history books and it was left out of the schools after integration.*
>
> *The policy change too, was to hopefully try to look at students equally and meet them where they were. And if you didn't have the knowledge – we knew these teachers would not teach what they did not know. So we were going to have to give them that*

information if we wanted them to get on this bandwagon and help move our students forward and help them become proficient.

Terry Emeka Thomas said, *"I think [the legislation] was designed to correct the records on the African American and African story in regards to contributions and significance of Blacks to society."* Thomas' statement informs us that correction must precede inclusion, because what good is inclusion if the curriculum is structurally incorrect from the beginning?

Correction and inclusion is a form of justice that legitimates the research, which is consistent with the Afrocentric canon of *Utulivu*. Justice is required because it is an African value standard that initially sets things in order and re-establishes order when disorder rises. Justice is greatly needed for African American children in schools and school systems that have been doing them an injustice by mis-educating them and creating schools that fail perpetually and miserably to meet basic standards.

3. Who were the major agents and actors who brought this legislation into being? Was the community involved in the process? If so, was (Afrocentric) agency demonstrated? If so, in what ways?

The third theme that emerged in conjunction with the third interview question is ***consciousness and competence***. Amos Wilson defines consciousness as "a state of wakefulness" and "alertness," which "makes the achievement of some goals possible" (Wilson, 1998). Therefore, consciousness can be said to be an expanded awareness of problems, possibilities, and pathways to meet a goal. Wilson posits consciousness as a prerequisite of power. Competence is possession of knowledge, skills, and will to complete a task or reach a goal. A person can have a measure of competence, but lack consciousness. A person can also be conscious, but lack competence.

The theme consciousness and competence emerged logically from the data because the legislators and Task Force members responsible for sponsoring Florida Statute 1003.42(h) had to have a measure of historical and cultural consciousness to consider sponsoring it and a measure of political competence to see that it was passed. Coalitions of people with consciousness were required to bring this legislation into being and in this regard, Afrocentric agency was demonstrated by those involved.

The third element of the Afrocentric Canon is *uhaki,* which means "harmony." According to this canon, Afrocentric research "requires a research procedure that is fair to all participants, especially those being researched" (Reviere, 2001, p. 725). Harmony was demonstrated in the research design by working within the schedule constraints of each informant. In particular, the legislators were difficult to reach and even more difficult to schedule an interview with, but harmony prevailed. Each was offered the opportunity to remain anonymous in the study but consented to being named specifically.

Harmony was also demonstrated amongst those interviewed. Each recognized the other's contributions, often without being asked or prompted. For example, **Rep. Frederica Wilson** stated, "*Myself, along with State Representative. Rudy Bradley and State Senator Jim Hargrett, were very instrumental in bringing this legislation to fruition."* Rep. Wilson's experience as an educator peaked her consciousness and forged her competence as demonstrated here:

> *Having worked in Florida's education system at all levels, with my tenure as a teacher, an elementary school principal, and a member of the school board, the intricacies of state curriculum was a matter I could not ignore. The omission of large parts of the history of such a significant segment of the population became painfully obvious to me. Children in K-12 are living the most impressionable years of their lives, and I knew that*

African American children deserved a complete look at the history their ancestors also took part in.

That her consciousness served to inform her competence as a legislator instrumental in the passing of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) is another indication of harmony in the findings of this study. Several respondents discussed this correspondence between their consciousness, their convictions, the competence, and their actions with respect to the legislation.

Rep. Rudy Bradley indicated that his historical consciousness was a key factor in sponsoring this legislation:

"I have always had an interest in American history and I have always had an interest in African American history, in particular." He further indicated, "*...during my studies at the University of Tampa, one of the things that became very apparent to me is that a lot of our history had been omitted and had not necessarily been told, in my opinion, in a very accurate form."*

Bradley used this consciousness of historical ommissions to develop the competence as a legislator to sponsor the African American History Legislation. He explained, "…*When I began my tenure in the Legislature, one of the things that I decided would be important would be to see if I could get a bill through the Legislature that would require the teaching of African American history."*

Bradley further declared his conscious reasons for structuring the wording of the legislation to include a more panoramic view of African American history beginning in Africa:

I am sure you read the bill and are aware of the fact that the bill basically covers African American History, ***going back to Africa*** [emphasis mine]*; it deals with studying the Middle Passage, it deals with slavery, it deals with the Emancipation Proclamation and it*

requires the teaching also of significant contributions that African Americans have made to American society.

This consciousness served to inform Bradley's competence as a legislator instrumental in the passing of Florida Statute 1003.42(h).

Senator Jim Hargrett's consciousness was peaked when he discovered his very personal family connection with African American history. While serving in the Florida State House of Representative, near the time of the celebration of the anniversary of Florida's statehood, Hargrett told me that he was given a list of the 1885 Members of the Constitutional Convention. He noted that one of the members was Amos Hargrett, a Black man. *"I called my mother and asked her to contact some of our relatives to find out who Amos Hargrett was. And she called me back and told me that was my great-grandfather."* The rising embers of consciousness inspired Hargrett to do further research and he consulted Canter Brown, a well-known Florida historian and archivist, and author of *Florida's Black Public Officials, 1867-1924*. Hargrett said:

Canter provided me a lot of information on my great-grandfather. That sort of peaked my interest in going further to find out who he was and who were the people that were his contemporaries and what impact it had on Florida. And I discovered to my surprise that the people who served during that time had a real impact on Florida as we know it today. Our system of free public education is one of the issues that stuck with me that not many people know, and I have taken civics and history in Florida. And not many people knew that there was a Black man by the name of Jonathan Gibbs that was responsible for our system of free publication education.

Hargrett's consciousness led him to some amazing findings. So amazing were these findings for him that he felt Black children and all children must know these things in order to have a full understanding of Florida's history. He explained further:

> *With some of the material that I discovered, I just felt like, in addition to African American children knowing the history of African Americans, all people in Florida also need to know the contributions of African Americans in order to understand Florida's history and…I developed this bill and asked Representative Bradley to sponsor it in the House and we successfully prevailed on the Senate to pass it and the House to pass it.*

Here we see Hargrett's consciousness brought into competent action.

Terry Emeka Thomas's consciousness was deeply influenced in the early 1980s by his teacher, Dr. Walter Palmer. *"I have been involved with this type of education, since the early 1980s; my mentor Dr. Walter Palmer had led me to the writings and research of Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop and I read his book*, The African Origins of Civilization." Thomas's budding consciousness not only informed and inspired his teaching, but also his organizing and activism:

> *From that book [Diop's], I formulated my worldview and I reasoned that if there is going to be legislation or any type of African American history it has to be from Dr. Diop's perspective, an African-centered perspective. That was my concern, that it would not be watered down into a history about slavery. That it goes beyond that into the development of the African story at the time of Kemet (Egypt) onward.*

Other aspects of this question, "*Was the community involved in the process? If so, was (Afrocentric) agency demonstrated?"* are incorporated in the responses to the last question presented below.

4. **What specific steps were taken to bring this legislation into being and with what consequences (both intended and unintended)?**

The fourth theme that emerged in the data in conjunction with the fourth interview question is ***policy and priority***. Policy indicates where a municipality or society places its priorities. At the root of policy is politics – that is, the distribution of resources and the agency and agendas that are behind the power relations of who gets what and when. Priority refers to something that is given special attention, preceding others, in importance or perceived importance. Policy and priority can be said to be indications of power, but it is arguable as to whether the power is *artificial* or *authentic*.

For African people, community is a central part of the culture. As noted previously, the concept of *Ubuntu* states: "I am because we are and because we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1969). There is also an African proverb that says: "A person is a person because there are people" (http://adiama.com/ancestralconnections/2010/03/02/umuntu-ngumuntu-ngabantu-a-person-is-a-person-because-of-people/). Both of these proverbs are indicative of the premium African culture places on communitarian consciousness and communal activity. The fourth element in the Afrocentric Canon, *Ujamaa*, indicates that "theory and practice should be informed by the actual and aspired interests of the community" (Reviere, 2001, p. 725).

To organize people to make them aware of the African American history legislation's importance and why it should take priority was a deliberate process. **Rep. Frederica Wilson** observed:

> *Aside from state legislators, I recall that advocacy groups such as the State of Florida African American History Task Force were heavily involved in promoting awareness of these academic needs along with making recommendations to different departments and agencies. Additionally, with the creation of official committees to assist in determining*

what this improved curriculum would be comprised of, the community was able to play a significant role. Committee members included not only retired educators and school board members, but also parents and regular citizens. This way, everyone was given a voice and able to contribute to the future of our children's education.

Rep. Wilson further noted:

The traditional steps to introduce a bill and gather support were taken inside the state House and Senate. And yet, outside of the state capital, groups were engaging in much larger discussions of how to transition to include African American history in Florida's curriculum in the most effective way. Whether that was teachers coming together to decide on ways to move forward, or school boards expanding on new content to be included in official examinations, the seed had been planted for true change.

Senator Jim Hargrett recalled:

I asked Rudy Bradley, who was the House member, to sponsor it. If he had any suggestions to change it, we would make the changes and then the bill would be introduced, and then go to committee, and then when it goes to committee, it is subjected to amendment during the legislative process.

Terry Emeka Thomas helped to organize educators to get behind the African American history legislation. Serving as the president of the Black Caucus of the National Education Association Florida State Affiliate, Thomas helped to organize and strategize around the drafting and passing of the African American history legislation.

So while the process was on the way, being the state elect president of the Black Caucus for the NEA, State Affiliate, that [the African American history legislation] was number one on my agenda, to put my leadership into supporting these proposals. That was

number one on my agenda. So at our annual meeting – state representative assembly, as we call it in NEA – the president of our teacher's union happened to be Black and I was Black and he knew that I was a forceful person. He told Professor James Eaton of the Florida Black Archives. So my caucus introduced Professor Eaton to the State Union at a hearing and Professor Eaton explained the importance of the proposal. At my urging, I encouraged the State Teacher's Union to get behind the proposal and to endorse Professor Eaton and what the Black History Task Force was doing; he was on the Task Force, Professor Eaton.

Dr. Bernadette Kelley's consciousness is complemented by her competence as an instructional technology educator and grant writer. As the African American History Task Force Chair and Principal Investigator, she raised funds and managed grants that supported the implementation of Florida Statute 1003.42(h). She structured face-to-face professional development opportunities for teachers and oversaw the implementation of an online platform for professional development to help teachers become more culturally competent in their delivery of instruction at it relates to the African American history legislation:

. . .When I started and I took over in 2000, the Task Force was receiving $25,000 a year to implement the program. This has grown to $100,000 and has been as high as $200,000. When President Obama came in and gave us previous money, we applied for and we received the additional $100,000.

Dr. Kelley also indicated the challenges of getting decision-makers to see the importance of funding the legislation. One can determine what policies take priority by the funds allocated:

Well, I think policy right now, the legislation is there, but implementation of the policy has to be further explored. And that was the thing under Senator Anthony Hill that we

have to be looking at now. How can we move this out of just a recommendation kind of mood and make it a line item in the legislation budget, because if it is a line item in the legislator budget it gets more attention because people go after the money. Rather than $100,000 – that is not a lot of money – every year to teach 67 school districts about how to incorporate or utilize the materials that are out there to teach African and African American history. So we are working to change the policy somewhat and make it be part of a straight line item in the state legislature's budget.

I asked Dr. Kelley what kind of monies are put towards policies that take priority. She laughed.

Right now I am a Deputy Director for Environmental Studies; we received an Environmental Grant from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). We get $15,000,000 over five years and this is the third time we have gone for the grant. We are in the process of writing the grant again and there is going to be another $15,000,000 over five years to train 50 scientists from under-represented populations.

So a renewable $15,000,000 is appropriated for a five-year term to train 50 scientists. But $100,000 a year is appropriated to train 177,853 public school teachers in the state of Florida (http://www.edweek.org/topics/states/florida/) to be in compliance with the African American History Legislation in a society that is increasingly diverse and in need of the cultural competencies that the African American History Legislation prescribes.

Wilson, Bradley, Hargrett, Kelley, Thomas, and Raing all agreed that Rep. Rudy Bradley and Senator Jim Hargrett were responsible for introducing the bill and getting it through the Florida State House and Senate. Kelley and Thomas recognized the seminal work of Dr. James Eaton, a professor at FAMU and director of the Florida Black Archives on FAMUs campus. His scholarship and insights were indispensable in helping to organize the wording of the legislation.

Kelley and Thomas also indicated that Commissioner of Education, Doug Jamerson, was impactful in the legislation's coming into being. Kelley noted:

> *Commissioner Jamerson definitely had an impact. He helped spearhead this legislation. They were adamant about getting it on the books because of the population in the State of Florida, more than 2/3 of the children in the public school system in Florida were minority, not just African American, but Haitians, or from the Caribbean or Hispanic or have some African parts of the diaspora in their heritage. So they were adamant about it being taught.*

Thomas indicated, *"Commissioner Jamerson called forth the leading intellects of that time on the question of African American culture."*

The Afrocentric canon element of *Kujitoa* requires the researcher to "emphasize considerations of how knowledge is structured" (Reviere, 2001, p. 716). I have given careful consideration as to how the knowledge is structured and constructed, mindful that for many students and researchers, this may be their first encounter with Afrocentricity and Africological research design. It is my hope that this research design and the research findings will inform students and researchers as to what Afrocentricity is and inspire them to consider using Africological methodologies in their studies.

Not all the testimonies of respondents were in agreement, however. There seems to be a discrepancy as to whether the African American history legislation preceded the Holocaust legislation or vice versa.

Terry Emeka Thomas reported that:

> *State Representative Rudy Bradley was brought into office when the bill was in the proposal stage to find out the gist of what was going on and Mr. Bradley indicated that*

the Jewish community had first proposed a Holocaust education bill and he propositioned them and indicated that he would like to attach an African American history bill along with the Holocaust bill, and the two communities agreed that was plausible and the best way to go. So you had a Holocaust education bill and an African American history bill in context together. So it was a political arrangement by the Jewish legislators and the Black legislators.

However, **Debbye Raing** recalled this process differently:

*No, no. Ours was about to pass but it got hung up – I don't know in the Senate or the House – when the Holocaust folks couldn't get theirs passed by itself, and so, you know, with their political wrangling and everything they attached the Holocaust not on to the African Americans but under Item 2, so the Holocaust was labeled the Letter G [Florida State 1003.42**(g)**], when African American studies should [have been] labeled letter G and then African American studies became letter H [Florida Statute 1003.42**(h)**].*

Rep. Rudy Bradley recalled the events similarly:

As I recall African American preceded the requirement that the Holocaust be taught as a part of history and the Holocaust [legislation] basically came about as the result of the fact that the African American history was being put forth. And the Holocaust [legislation] concept was put forth after it became apparent that the teaching of African American history was going to be successfully worked through the legislative process.

Dr. Bernadette Kelley suggested that the two pieces of legislation were passed simultaneously:

At the same time the Holocaust community was thinking of the same thing, so they went in together and both of them were passed at the same time: laws for teaching of the

Holocaust and the teaching of African and African American history. That's as far as I am familiar.

These conflicting testimonies demonstrate that the work of qualitative analysis is not always as tight and clean as we might like. It also demonstrates differing vantage points from those who were directly involved, those who observed from afar, and those who became involved in the implementation process after the legislation had passed.

The last theme that emerged as an overarching pattern of influence is that of ***power and precedence***. In the end, policy is a question of power. Nobles has defined power as "the ability to define reality and to get others to accept your definition as if it were their own" (Hilliard, Payton-Stewart & Williams, 1990, p. *xviii*). Power defines and determines priority. Power determines who and what takes precedence, when, where and why.

Were African American legislators able to push the legislation through on their own merits? Or did it require that the African American legislation be attached to the Holocaust legislation to be passed? Or did those pushing the Holocaust legislation attach the African American History legislation to the Holocaust legislation? What does this say about power? What does this say about precedence? What does this say about a people's ability to impose their will upon the polity?

According to Debbye Raing, when asked if she thought ACE Movement led to the passing or implementation of the African American History Legislation:

I don't know if Afrocentricity at that time was as prevalent then but they talked about not only putting in the history but the music, the accomplishment of people from the continent. Not just from America, so I just think these people were so astute and far

ahead of themselves when they helped to do the research for the legislators who were trying to get this law passed.

In response to the same question, Molefi Asante said:

I think Asa Hilliard had a far greater influence in Florida than I did and I think that is why you have the component that speaks to what happened before slavery--because he was grounded strongly in the classical history of Africa. So he understood that it was essential for that to happen, and the people who worked with him, and also I should say the Na'im Akbar must have had some impact on it as well, because they were both very active in Florida around this time. I came into Florida after the law had already been developed.

Other respondents were not asked this question directly. Debbye Raing seemed unsure as to whether Afrocentricity or African-centered educators had an influence on the formulation of the Florida African American History Legislation. Molefi Asante, however, indicates that Asa Hilliard, an African-centered educator, *did* have an indirect impact on the formulation of the legislation since he was consulting there before the Legislation was formulated. These research findings lead to conclusions that can be drawn about how policy is shaped, formed, drafted, negotiated, and advanced—and the role of members of the Black community—from teachers, school leaders to professors and policy makers—acting with consciousness, conscience, and agency. These findings also lend themselves to the creation of a paradigm for Afrocentric educational policy analysis for which there currently is no research literature. This issue is discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this Afrocentric case study policy analysis was to understand how Florida Statute 1003.42(h) came into being. This then led to the question "who was responsible for bringing it into being?" In an attempt to find these answers, since policy is not formed in a cultural vacuum, I also had to ask: "What was the socio-cultural context which precipitated the drafting and passing of this legislation?" I was concerned with illuminating elements of change that could lead to improving the life chances of African American students in the public school system by prioritizing policies that create curricula that properly represents African and African American views, values, perspectives, and accomplishments. Thus, this is an Afrocentric case study policy analysis with specific subjective aims to inform and empower African people (Asante, 2015). There are no claims of objectivity or neutrality.

The implications of this research study are deep, wide, and far-reaching. The prospect of being able to ensure that all children, especially African American children, receive a culturally-affirming education in content and intent is inspiring to consider – no matter how cumbersome and messy the process. To know that legislation is in place and could be in place in each state ensuring equitable and culturally affirming education for all is the culmination of the work of many elders and ancestors; this study offers an exciting opportunity to examine and expand this important legacy.

Often Eurocentric research announces, promotes, and represents itself as universal and objective when, in fact, it is very particular and subjective (Asante, 2008; Mazama, 2003). Often policies that are promoted as acultural or universal and available to all Americans remain inaccessible in terms of any true benefits for African people. Or a policy is said to have taken African American issues and advancement into account, but the policy is not constructed or

enacted to get clear and demonstrable results for African Americans. This is particularly the case with respect to education reform policy. The No Child Left Behind Act is an example of both points (Darling Hammond, 2010).

This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4 and recommendations for policy, practice, and further research. In seeking answers to my research questions, the hope was not only to gain the answers, but also to be able to use those answers to find elements that could be used to construct a framework for Afrocentric educational policy formation and Afrocentric educational policy analysis. This framework will be discussed later in this chapter.

Culture, Oppression, Power, and Policy

Florida Statute 1003.42(h) cannot be said to be an Afrocentric policy. The legislation did not call for an Afrocentric examination of the contributions of African and African American people to America and the world. And this is a critical distinction. After being called upon as a consultant to observe teachers and schools in the implementation of the Legislation, pioneering Afrocentric theorist and scholar, Molefi Asante observed:

> . . .the thing about teaching the African American experience or teaching about enslavement of the African American and all that, you can do all that and *still* not be Afrocentric. And that's the problem that I had when I went to some of the Florida schools…we ran into this problem of *who gets to define what is African American history and African American Studies*… [emphasis mine] (Personal communication, interview with Dr. Molefi Kete Asante).

It is worth noting and reiterating that Afrocentricity is about standpoint, place, and perspective – from what perspective an historical or contemporary narrative is constructed or

recounted. Afrocentricity "investigates in every situation where we are involved, the position of the African person as an agent" (personal interview with Asante). Afrocentricity is a quest for agency and "a consciousness of victory" (Mazama, 2003). In addition, while the Afrocentrist recognizes oppression and speaks to it, Afrocentricity does not dwell on oppression.

While Florida's African American history legislation is not an Afrocentric policy, *per se*, it did create space for Afrocentric agency to operate. By Afrocentric agency I mean it provides a progressive place for Afrocentric and conscientious people to better operate on behalf of the life chances of African American children. That the African American History Legislation is not Afrocentric is a significant point worth noting. For there to be equity and agency, policies are needed that provide a foundation for Afrocentric agency to operate. This means that the legislation should be specific enough that citizens ought to be able to access the legislation to improve the life chances and academic trajectory of African American students.

In my research, I examined the African-Centered Education (ACE) movement as a possible catalyst, which inspired the drafting and passing of the Florida African American history legislation. A foundational element of the ACE movement was the correction of the current curriculum and the inclusion of African American perspectives, accomplishments. and contributions. In addition to correction and inclusion, the aim of ACE was the reconstruction of African and African American history and culture, rescuing it from the hands of those who dismembered it for the purposes of oppression (Karenga, 2001).

According to the tenets of the ACE movement the reconstruction of African historical narratives had to begin with the anteriority of ancient Kemet and Kush as an ideological and philosophical starting point. For as Diop (1991) theorized, Kemet and Kush are to Africa as Greece and Rome are to Europe. Europe and America rely heavily on Greco-Roman concepts of

philosophy, law, governance, economics, education, etc. Africans must rely on foundational concepts of the classical African civilizations of Kemet, Kush, Ghana, Mali, and Songhoy to provide guidance in all areas of life, living, scientific, and intellectual inquiry and praxis.

Sizemore noted the reason that chronic problems persist in American education: "Having failed to identify the problem adequately, researchers have trouble finding solutions" (Sizemore, 2008, p. 289). This realization is reflected in the title of Sizemore's book *Walking in Circles: The Black Struggle for School Reform*. This is what Sizemore says happens when problems are not defined adequately. She argues that most educators, administrators, researchers, and policy makers have not adequately addressed the effect of white supremacy ideology on American educators and education. "Researchers, in fact, try to hide it, avoid it and ridicule it" (p. 288) while focusing on "symptoms rather than problems" (p. 287). Despite many initiatives and reforms, Sizemore observed,

> "We are [still] no closer to the elimination of the achievement gap in public schools. In fact, those who know how to do it [close it] and have done so, have risked their careers and receive no respect. . .those whose schools were low achieving, but well disciplined, were rewarded; *keeping the African quiet is more important than educating him* [italics mine]. This, in and of itself, is a manifestation of the imputation of Black inferiority (p. 305).

The issues Sizemore raised have not been dealt with effectively in educational policy or practice and have grave implications for those who seek to truly serve African American students.

Cultural Omission in The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, released as an Executive Order in 2012, announced as its mission, "to restore the country to its role as the global leader in education" (http://sites.ed.gov/whieeaa/executive-order/). This statement is more in keeping with America's quest for scientific supremacy, military might, and intellectual authority hearkening back to the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Russians launching *Sputnik* in 1957. Nonetheless, the Executive Order concedes that "African Americans lack equal access to highly effective teachers and principals, safe schools, and challenging college-preparatory classes, and they disproportionately experience school discipline and referrals to special education" (http://sites.ed.gov/whieeaa/executive-order/). These concessions of inequity, however, did not place them within the context of white supremacy ideology, as Sizemore warned.

The Executive Order had some progressive recommendations like complementing and reinforcing prior initiatives to strengthen HBCUs; increasing general understanding of educational challenges facing African Americans; recruitment, preparation, and development of successful African American teachers and school leaders; and recovery strategies that better engage African American youth and identification of evidence-based best practices. However, while this Executive Order declared that it "shall provide funding and administrative support," no dollar amount was mentioned and it was, in fact, unfunded.

And if evidence-based practices were considered, such consideration of said practices was either incorrect or incomplete. "In a study of academically successful Black students, D. Carter (2008b) found that their 'critical race consciousness and pride in being members of the Black community were two elements that enabled them to develop strategies for succeeding I the school context and pursuing their future goals'" (King, Akua, & Russell, 2014, p. 30). In

addition, "Graham and Anderson (2008) provide evidence that positively embracing their 'blackness' is associated with Black males' higher academic achievement and resilience" (King, Akua & Russell, 2014, p. 30). Further, "in addition to racial socialization and positive identification with Black culture, researchers also find that critical racism awareness and a collective cultural orientation can serve as protective cultural assets for academic success and personal resilience" (Bowman & Howard, 1985; King, Akua, & Russell, 2014, p. 30).

Also noteworthy is the fact that in the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, there is no mention of the critical role culture plays in African American student achievement. This is not an insignificant oversight. By not taking culture or capital into account, those who formulated this Executive Order produced a beautiful document that is a symbol without substance that rings hollow in the ears of those who need it most. The Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy Formulation and Analysis (to be discussed later) poses critical cultural questions, which require real and relevant answers in the educational policy formulation process and transparent clarity in the educational policy analysis process.

The ACE Movement brought on a more overt cultural assault on the curriculum. African-centered scholars were identified and vilified so they could be ostracized (Carruthers, 1995; Schlesinger, 1992). Unprecedented attempts were made to assassinate the character and integrity of the scholars and their research. In addition to scathing articles against African-centered scholars in the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine and *U.S. New & World Report* (Browder, 1992), these vicious and vitriolic attacks constituted the *Intellectual Warfare* (Carruthers, 1995) waged by Eurocentric and hegemonic think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institute, Heritage Foundation, and Hoover Institute, to name a few. Each has policy production as part of their agenda (Wilson, 1998). The ACE Movement

and its scholars were under such acute attack because they sought to rectify issues of history, identity and group memory as it relates to educational excellence and empowerment.

Selective Memory Manipulation in Education

The gaping omissions and monstrous misinterpretations in school curricula relative to the African and African American accomplishments and contributions to America and the world constitute a phenomenon that motivated the participants in this study to mobilize to rectify. This problem of omission and misinterpretation of the African and African American experience leads to what I call *Selective Memory Manipulation (SMM)*. Selective Memory Manipulation is *a power dynamic characterized by the process of strategically limiting or eliminating certain cultural memories for the purpose of controlling thought and behavior and steering African people away from emancipatory thinking and activity*.

Examples of SMM include notions that patriotic Americans should remember July 4 as Independence Day, but not the Haitian Revolution which produced the first Black republic in the western hemisphere and that it was very instrumental in revolts that led to the American Civil War and emancipation of captive Africans (Carruthers, 1995; Nobles, 2015). Americans are encouraged to remember Martin Luther King Jr. and his nonviolent direct action tactics, but not Robert Williams, the Deacons for Defense, the Black Panthers or the Black Liberation Army, who utilized armed resistance to secure their rights and silently support King's nonviolent initiatives (Umoja, 2013). Americans are encouraged to be patriotic by remembering 9/11 as a heinous terrorist attack upon American freedom, but not the strangling of Eric Garner by New York police, the murder of Sandra Bland while in police custody, the severing of Freddie Gray's spine and his subsequent death while in police custody, or the various other acts of current and frequent American terrorism visited upon African Americans with impunity.

This Selective Memory Manipulation allows for further exploitation and marginalization, for as Wilson observed, "To manipulate history is to manipulate consciousness. To manipulate consciousness is to manipulate possibilities; and to manipulate possibilities is to manipulate power" (Wilson, 1993, p. 2). And further, "…if there were not a direct relationship between history and *money*…history and *power*…history and *rulership*, history and *domination*, then why is it that the European rewrote history?" (Wilson, 1993, p. 15). In *Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness* (1993), Wilson, a Black psychologist, demonstrated how history shapes activity in individuals and groups of people. His findings, along with my own, indicate a need for cultural and historical reorientation. Policy can assist in this process or militate against it by determining what issues take priority and precedence over others. The passing of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) was, in a sense, a recognition and response to the need for historical reorientation.

Schiele offers a framework for Afrocentric Social Policy Analysis that takes culture and agency into account. "The first feature of the Afrocentric policy analytic framework is to examine the extent to which the policy has both pernicious and helpful implications for vulnerable groups in a society, but particularly people of African descent (Schiele, 2000, p. 173). He also argues that, "…an analysis of both the long-term and immediate historical antecedents and policy precedents is necessary to grasp a holistic understanding of a policy" (Schiele, 2000, p. 177).

Based upon my research study, I have developed a Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy Production and Analysis that will address the power dynamic and the problem of selective memory manipulation. The reason an Afrocentric approach is necessary is because policies can be created that mention African American students (or mention them indirectly by inaccurate and insulting labels such as "at-risk," "marginalized," "minority," etc.) and still not meet needs and

solve problems for African American students because the problems are not analyzed and solutions not shaped by the views, values and perspectives of African Americans. The Afrocentric canon of *Utulivu* and Ma'at requires this concept of justice. Justice must be justified by meeting the needs and solving the problems of African American students who have languished in insufficient schools for far too long.

The elements of this paradigm and its relation to the findings of this study are discussed below. Florida is one of the largest states in the nation and, as such, shares many of the same cultural, political and historical issues as other states. It can thus be used as a model for introducing wider policy initiatives nationwide. Next, I present four recommendations for policy and future research based on the application of this paradigm to the analysis of the findings of this Afrocentric case study policy analysis yields

Recommendations for Policy, ACE Practice, and Future Research

1. **Florida's African American History Legislation should be a national initiative with similar benchmarks for implementation and evaluation as indicated by the State of Florida Commissioner's Task Force on African American History.**

The analysis of The State of Florida Commissioner's Task Force on African American History website indicate that the Task Force succeeded in setting forth a comprehensive set of benchmarks relative to achieving compliance with the African American history legislation. The Task Force even constructed a set of criteria for achieving exemplary status for the successful implementation of the legislation. The benchmarks for exemplary status include school board approval of the initiative, structured professional development, an African American Studies curriculum, structured teaching of the African American Studies curriculum, university-school district collaboration and parent/community partnerships (http://afroamfl.org/criteria-for-exemplary-status/). Such an initiative could create robust

opportunities for increases in African American student engagement and achievement, intercultural and intergenerational community dialogue, understanding, and agency.

Rep. Rudy Bradley stated:

> *I thought that it was important, number one, for all students to clearly understand the significant contribution for everyone who resides in America because America is a very unique country in that, in my opinion, it is the only country in the world that has the demographic make-up such as what we have in America.*

When asked if he felt that the Florida African American History Legislation should serve as a catalyst to a national initiative, Senator Jim Hargrett remarked:

> *I would certainly hope so. Of course, States are really jealous of their prerogative and education policy and so in my opinion it would probably be difficult for Congress to sort of mandate the curriculum from Washington but there is always a way to put the language standard so that each State should consider including it in its curriculum,\. You just have to allow the State enough flexibility to do it themselves.*

African American researchers and practitioners have long determined and demonstrated through scientific research that a curriculum and instructional strategies that are centered in the unique culture of African Americans increases student achievement and well-being for African Americans (Hilliard & Sizemore, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Hilliard 1997; Hilliard in Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2003; King, 2005; King & Swartz, 2014, 2016; Wang & Huguley). If the benchmarks and criteria the Florida Task force and legislation established were followed, not only would African and African American history be successfully infused across the curriculum; we would see an increase in student achievement for African American students.

2. An authentic African-centered perspective must be properly considered in any curriculum or school that calls itself multicultural.

Multicultural education seeks to present diverse cultural perspectives so that students of all ethnicities will experience equal educational opportunities (Banks, 2008). Some schools and school systems have reduced and relegated multicultural education to "food, fashion and festival" (Karenga, 2001), which is very superficial. It must go deeper into the views, values, standpoints, and perspectives of various cultural groups. The African-centered perspective is one that must be taken into account if a curriculum is to be truly multicultural (Asante, 2008; Banks, 2001; Karenga, 2001). This can be done in a way that edifies rather than alienates both African and non-African students. It is also important to reiterate Molefi Asante's insight on this critical matter:

> …in America they educate people from a European point of view and they could not care less about the Mexican Americans here or African Americans in this country or Asians in this country. It's like there is something universal about the particular experience of white people and that's not true, it is not a universal experience. It is a *particular* experience that has to be seen as *particular* and it cannot be seen as above others, it has to be seen alongside them. And once we see European culture alongside other cultures then we can talk about somehow an America, a pluralistic America or multicultural but what white people mean when they say multi-cultural is that they are going to normally have a little space for you to talk about black celebrations or achievements. And what we are saying as Afrocentrists is that no I want an education in which black persons can look at a particular political, historical, phenomenon and look at the phenomenon and ask what role did our people play and even if we don't know all the full answers, how do we tease them out? (Personal Interview)

3. Authentic African-centered pedagogy and perspectives must be properly understood and taught as an integral part of any teacher education program in order to meet the needs of today's students and prepare them for a world of diversity.

We live in a multicultural society and world in which children are experiencing increasing diversity. Because the African-centered perspective is one of many perspectives that can make a multicultural education robust, teacher education programs must incorporate the teaching of authentic African-centered pedagogy and perspectives. The adjective *authentic* is used here quite intentionally to delineate it from inaccurate pedagogy and perspectives that have been falsely attributed to Afrocentricity and African-centered education and called Afrocentrism. Often these inaccuracies begin with definitions and explanations that are alien to the work of those who have labored as Afrocentric researchers, theorists, and educational practitioners.

Afrocentricity has found in its wake accusations of anti-white rhetoric, reverse racism, intolerance, demagoguery, upholding segregation, and the like. On this point, African-centered educators began to clarify their position during a controversy over renaming a school in Kansas City after the imminent historian John Henrik Clarke:

> *The African-centered perspective is not anti-anyone.* Contrary, the African centered perspective focuses on humanity and realizes that the hierarchy of *race is a man-made notion*. We believe that there is only one race, the human race, that has scientifically been documented as having an African origin. As such, *the concept of one race being inferior and other races being superior is not an African-centered position*. We reject ethno-centric notions that marginalize other ethnic groups and disrespect their realities, if they are different. The African-centered perspective respects and reserves the right for all children to learn about the rich history and cultural contributions that relates

to people of the world [italics mine]"

(http://www.nbufront.org/html/BushTelegraph/ACE_SchoolNameContr.html).

African-centered pedagogy and perspectives posit that the nature and needs of African children are unique and require specific instructional modalities. Afrocentricity has a particular dimension and a universal dimension, meaning it can be applied to African American children in particular and has some universal value for all children, in general (Asante, 2008; Banks, 2001; Karenga, 2001).

4. **Given that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) produce over 50% of the nation's African American teachers (Williams & Ashley, 2004), targeted assistance and increased economic resources should be allocated by the government to HBCU schools of education.**

As was demonstrated by Professor X' role in the development of the Florida legislation, HBCUs constitute a rich, real and relevant resource that is underutilized and should therefore be the specific target of increased funding to produce more African American teachers who are culturally competent and capable of reaching and teaching today's urban youth.

It should also be noted that Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, (FAMU) a historically Black University, was the headquarters for the African American History Task Force. Its administrative offices were housed on the campus, along with daily operations, programming, management of funds and teacher training institutes – all since the African American History Legislation was passed in 1994. FAMU demonstrated the administrative sophistication to provide assistance in running the Task Force since its inception, including faculty members like Dr. Bernadette Kelley and Dr. James Eaton, duly qualified and suited to the task. However, I did not discover any evidence that the presence of the Task Force at FAMU influenced the preparations of teachers.

In addition, research demonstrates that benefits accrue to African American students who have African American teachers, including increases in achievement and advanced placement and decreases in suspension and expulsion. Rich in the tradition of producing African American educational excellence, HBCUs are and ought to be the logical choice as host institutions for robust and well-funded programs for pre-service teachers (Fenwick, 2001; Williams & Ashley, 2004).

Asante has also observed: "There has to ultimately be an analysis not only of the curriculum but the entire structure of schooling in American society related to this whole notion of funding and tax base" (Interview with Asante). To this point, Fenwick (2013) also explained,

> In most urban centers…black political leadership does not have independent access to the capital that drives land development. These resources are still controlled by white male economic elites. Additionally, black elected local officials by necessity must interact with state and national officials. *The overwhelming majority of these officials are white males who often enact policies and create funding streams benefiting their interests and not the local black community's interests* [italics mine], (Fenwick, 2013).

Fenwick further notes,

> Local control of public schools (through elected school boards) is supposed to empower parents and community residents. This rarely happens in school districts serving black and poor students. Too often people intent on exploiting schools for their own personal gain short circuit the work of deep and lasting school and community uplift. Mayoral control, Teach for America, education management organizations and venture capital-funded charter schools have not garnered much grassroots support or enthusiasm among lower- and middle-income black parents whose children attend urban schools because

these parents often view these schemes as uninformed by their community and disconnected from the best interest of their children [italics mine] (Fenwick, 2003).

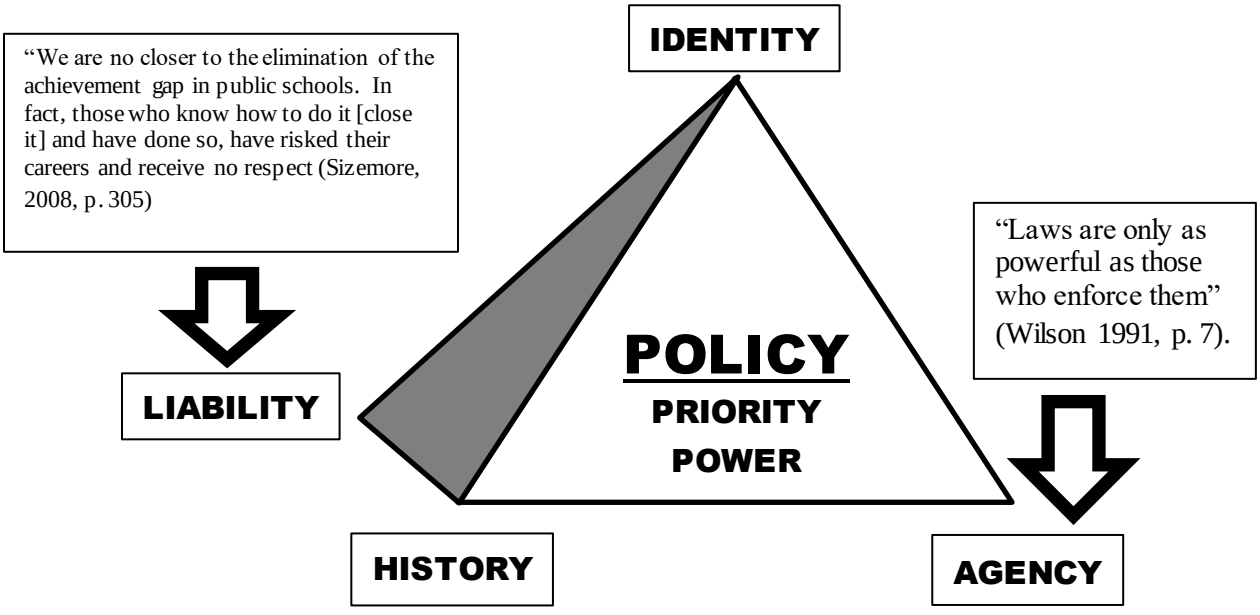
In the end, as Wilson painfully but poignantly observed, "laws are no stronger than those who enforce them" (Wilson, 1993, p. 7).

Afrocentric educational policy formation and analysis centers the policy in the image and interests of African people and places them in a position to be agents, actors, and subjects with agency rather than objects who are acted upon.

A Paradigm for Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis

The Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy Production and Analysis contains four elements and seven key points that should be applied to the formulation or analysis of any policy. Figure 3 presents a visual representation of the Paradigm.

Figure 3: Paradigm for Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis



The *Four Elements of Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis* represent the concepts that must be taken into account when producing or examining educational policy for African American students, in particular, and the African American community, in general.

Below I include brief reflection to illustrate how each of the four elements can be used, based on the findings of this of case study research.

Four Elements of Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis

1. **History**: What is the history of the problem that the policy is to address as it relates to African people? How was the problem dealt with in the past? How have similar problems been dealt with in the past? How effective were past policies and processes in solving the problem? Is the proposed solution superficial or short-sighted or is it layered and long-term? Relative to Florida's African American History Legislation, Debbye Raing, one of those interviewed noted that the issue of the teaching of African American history in public schools was one that was raised as far back as 2005 by concerned Black educators.
2. Identity: Is this problem related to the identity of African people? Does the proposed solution consider the identity and positionality of African people? Is the proposed solution based on an agency-oriented and *authentic* identity assessment or a deficit-based, *alien* identity assessment of African people? An authentic and accurate rendering of history must be taught to restore identity. Based on my research and educational practice, identity restoration is a key component in transforming achievement for African American students.
3. Agency: In what way will the masses of African people be empowered by this policy? Does the empowerment outweigh any problems the policy may cause? Does the policy consider Pan-African perspectives and how it will affect African people throughout the world? The lack of legislation regarding the infusion of African American historical content in the curriculum challenged my own agency as an educator and forced me to find ways to infuse the teaching of cultural content without the luxury of being backed by legislation.

4. Liability: Lurking in the shadows is that set of elements that are disadvantageous to African people; these are the things that are often not given proper consideration or are camouflaged, cosmetically-altered or sanitized for mass acceptance. As it relates to the Florida African American History Legislation, funding was not properly considered. The lack of funding has become a liability for the legislation. However, a cultural trait of African American people is that they have always found a way to do more with less. The State of Florida Commissioner's Task force on African American History has certainly demonstrated this trait.

The Four Elements of Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis serve as a foundation for The Paradigm for Afrocentric Policy Production and Analysis:

1. Public/Particular Problem: What is the problem? Who considers it a problem? Who is the policy really for and who will be empowered by it? Black educators and legislators in Florida recognized the problem of inaccurate and insufficient history being taught in public schools and organized to produce the African American History Legislation.
2. Population & Place: What group or groups of people are affected and where? The Black educators and legislators in Florida were clear that this legislation was structured to benefit African American children, in particular, and all children, in general.
3. Perspective: Why is it a problem? What are the positive and negative possibilities? In Florida, inaccurate and insufficient teaching of historical accomplishments and contributions of African Americans was a problem because history was only being taught through a Eurocentric lens. Positive possibilities include the infusion of authentic African American views, values, accomplishments and contributions. Negative possibilities include the fact that one can include African American history, but still do it

Eurocentrically, meaning, not focusing on agency and authenticity along with the views and values of African American people.

4. Positionality: What is the standpoint and power of the people with the problem? Are they speaking or organizing about it? Are they speaking and organizing from a position of power? In Florida, prior to the drafting and passing of the African American History Legislation, Black educators, community members and legislators organized to produce the legislation. They accessed their agency through organization and activism.
5. Priority: Why is the problem considered a priority? Who is able to make it a priority, how and why? Black educators, community members and legislators in Florida saw the lack of African American history in schools as a problem. Through their organization and activism they were able to make rectifying the problem a priority that ultimately became policy.
6. Political Power: Who has the ability to affect the distribution of needed resources for this problem? What is the strategy for African people acquiring this power if they do not already have it? How will the policy be implemented and by whom? Again, through their organization and activism Black educators, legislators and community members were able to affect the distribution of resources to fund the African American History Task Force at the state level.
7. Provision: How much funding will be provided for fidelity of implementation? What is the timeline for implementation? How will the policy be monitored, enforced and measure for progress? While funds were allocated as a line item in the state budget in Florida, the amount of funding has been insufficient to meet the task of solving the problem of infusing African and African American historical content into the curriculum.

8. Publication and Dissemination: How can/how will information about this policy be disseminated in the community, in the language of the community, to inform the community and leads its members toward action? In addition to the African American History Task Force holding professional development seminars for teachers, some school districts in Florida, like Palm Beach County School District, had Summer Institutes in which teachers and community members could go for training and classes on infusing African American history.

The Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy Production and Analysis can be used to determine what issues are of vital importance to African Americans, how those issues affect African American students and the community, and how policy can be formulated to meet needs and solve problems in African American communities. It can also be used to analyze existing policies to lend insight into how current policies can be accessed to meet needs and solve problems of the African American students and the community. It would be tremendously helpful, and arguably essential, for anyone representing the educational interests of African Americans to be familiar with this framework

Ultimately, America is at an impasse, with masses of African American students, largely in urban areas, that public school systems have been unable to effectively reach and teach. This signals a serious imbalance that is immoral and untenable, especially when proven solutions exist when not suppressed by white supremacist ideology and action. Public education has been shown to be an implicit and integral part of a democratic nation (Urban & Wagoner, 2009). DuBois noted in *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*, that "Public education for all at public expense, was, in the South, a Negro idea" (DuBois, 1939, p. 638). This can be seen as a reconstruction of ancient and medieval African educational practices in which there was free

public education for males and females in the Nile Valley (Kemet), the Niger Valley (Songhoy) and in Spain during the Moorish occupation (Hilliard, 1997; Pimienta-Bey, 2002; Maiga, 2008; Rashidi, 2011). It is also worth noting that DuBois's original title for the book *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* was *Black Reconstruction of* Democracy *in America* [emphasis mine] (Levering Lewis in DuBois, 1939, p. *ix*). The original title, supplanted by the publisher, Harcourt, Brace & Company, suggests that it was Black people who reconstructed the idea of democracy in America in thought and practice.

The Paradigm for Afrocentric Policy Formation and Analysis has a significant social justice component that brings the possibility of democratic policy production. But since democracy is a term that hearkens back to ancient Greece and its attendant value systems, a more precise African term is needed here to pinpoint what Afrocentric scholars, policy analysts, and activists look for – and that term is *Ma'at*. The ancient African ethical teachings of Kemet declare, "The balancing of the land lies in Ma'at – truth, justice and righteousness" (Karenga, 1984, p. 32). The imbalance in American education is clear. Many scholars, African-centered and otherwise, have given clarity to the solutions to bring balance to the land (Hilliard & Sizemore, 1984; Ladson, Billings, 1994; Hilliard, 1997; King, 2005; Sizemore, 2008; Shockley, Banks, 2008; 2008; King & Swartz, 2014; King & Swartz, 2016).

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study investigated how Florida Statute 1003.42(h) came into being, the cultural context which precipitated its drafting and passing, the agents and actors who played a seminal role in its formulation, and what it was intended to do with respect to culture and education. As a result of the research findings, a Paradigm for Afrocentric Educational Policy

Formulation and Analysis was developed. Though this was an exhaustive study, there is much more to be explored.

Future research could involve case studies examining the following questions:

1. What are African American students' perceptions about the need for the infusion of African American Studies into the curriculum?
2. How have teachers of different disciplines infused the African American Studies curriculum into their classes?
3. How have administrators led processes to infuse the African American Studies curriculum into their schools?

Terry Emeka Thomas was one of the people I interviewed for this research study because he was involved in the community activism that precipitated the drafting and passing of Florida's African American History Legislation. Incidentally, during the course of the this research study, Terry Emeka Thomas, who is now a resident of the state of Georgia, initiated Georgia House Bill 481 in 2015, an initiative which proposed the inclusion of African American, Native America, Latino, Women's and Jewish Holocaust history. The Bill uses the same language regarding African American history as Florida Statute 1003.42(h). It requires the teaching of:

> The history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before 44 the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the 45 enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society. 46 Instructional materials shall include the contributions of African Americans to American 47 society…(http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/481).

The Bill will be voted upon in January, 2017. This is another case for further research that could examine the process by which he and others organized in Georgia with legislators to create the Bill.

There are many questions that remain unanswered that provide educational researchers with ample opportunities to further our understanding of the Florida African American history legislation and how it can and has been infused to increase and improve African American student engagement and achievement. America has tremendous opportunity and deeply structured inequality in its society and schools. African American history legislation offers an opportunity to right some of the wrongs of the past and provide a more accurate rendering to America's school children of the seminal role Africans and African Americans have played in the shaping of America and world culture and civilization.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERSONAL DISCLOSURE INTERVIEW

In the interest of full disclosure, the following is a personal interview regarding my background in education, both personally and professionally and my involvement as a consultant with the State of Florida Commissioner's Task Force on African American History.

Melissa Speight Vaughn = M (Interviewer)

Chike Akua = C

Dialogue

M – 00 This is Melissa Speight Vaughn; I am interviewing Chike Akua for his doctoral dissertation.

The first question. Who is Chike Akua?

C – 01 OK, who is Chike Akua? I'll tell you the origins of that name, I guess, to begin with, and then I'll get into how it relates to me. The name *Chike* comes from the Ibo nation of West Africa in what would today be part of Nigeria. Chike means, "power of God." That is a name I was given when I went through rites of passage at Hampton University. In my junior year, I was part of a group on campus called the African Studies Cluster. What was interesting about that group was they did not have a charter from the University to exist. They applied for one and they tried to get a faculty advisor and so forth but that didn't stop the students from organizing events and having classes and different things of that nature. And so, I don't quite remember how I got invited to one of those gatherings but something resonated with me and I remember going to those meetings and meeting the brothers and sisters and then one of them approached me in my

junior year and said "listen, we are going to do a Rites of Passage program and we would like for you to consider being involved in it."

So, I was like; what is a Rites of Passage? My African consciousness was almost non-existent at that particular time. And so, they explained to me what a Rites of Passage was and I agreed to it and I decided to go through it. Towards the end of the Rites of Passage, after the elder brothers had the opportunity to observe me, they gave me a list of about 4 to 5 names based on what they had observed about me, and the name *Chike* kind of jumped out at me because it represented what I was striving to be. Another interesting thing about the African Studies Cluster and the brothers of Kemet Nu, which I was initiated into is the sister organization was the Sisters of Auset.

The other thing that was amazing to me about this group is that we had no advisement or guidance from any elders. This was a group of brothers and sisters who got together, who said, "We are not being taught the truth about who we are we need to know who we are and be grounded in this body of knowledge." So when you ask the question "Who is Chike Akua?" The answer is definitely grounded in that experience coming into the understanding of my purpose for being on the planet. Later after I graduated from Hampton, I was seeking a last name and I was doing a little bit of research trying to find out what would be an appropriate last name that dealt with my purpose and calling in life. In doing that research I came across the name *Akua*, which means "messenger." Akua has several different meanings. In some traditions it is actually a female name but obviously in the tradition that I took it, it is not a female name and it means, "messenger." So when you put the two names together; *Chike*, power of

God and *Akua*, messenger. That means, "messenger with the power of God" or "God's powerful messenger."

Interestingly, I was recently up in Canada doing some speaking at a conference and a brother came up to me afterwards and he told me about another meaning of the name *Akua* in the [indigenous] Hawaiian language. He began to explain to me that the original Hawaiians were African people who sailed to that part of the earth and in their traditional language *Akua* means "to receive and release the laws of God" or "to receive and release the laws of the soul," which also has a linguistic relativity to the meaning of *Akua* being messenger and then my name *Chike*, power of God. So it has kind of come full circle all these years. And so I have endeavored to carry this message of who we are as people; our history, our identity and our destiny.

M – 02 How does that relate to your journey to African-centered education?

C – 02 It is very significantly related to my journey in African-centered education. I guess I should mention how I even got into education. I was a very low performing student in high school and I barely, barely, got into college. When I did, right before my (I think it was my sophomore year) my advisor asked me what I wanted to major in I said education because I felt like, you know, I almost fell through the cracks and did not make it because I was a low performing student and barely got into college. I got in on probation actually and they said if you go to the Summer Bridge program and you're able to maintain a 2.0 grade point average, then we will accept you as a full-time student. I was so grateful to be accepted that I was able to go to the Summer Bridge program and I made a 4.0. I took two classes and made a 4.0.

So that's how I became an education major. Then they said, "Do you want to teach elementary or secondary?" And I said, "Well, I would like to teach secondary." So they said if you teach secondary you have to specialize in a content area. I chose English because I really like to write – not really realizing that it was going to entail a lot of reading because I didn't at that time like reading! Nonetheless, I became an English major and graduated with a degree in education with emphasis in English. Being an education major at Hampton, it was clear to me that there was an issue or crisis relative to the education of Black people. And the most perfect example of that that I could think of was myself since I barely made it in college and almost fell through the cracks.

So I was searching for what it would take to really reach and tap into the true potential of African American youth. I think it was my sophomore or junior year and I was taking a Foundations of Education class and we were given the option of doing a research paper or a project. So I chose to do a project – kind of a combination of both of them where I made the proposal to start an African American Male Academy not knowing that this was something already being done in different parts of the country; most notably in Detroit, which was an hour from where I grew up.

I grew up in Toledo, Ohio. I had no idea of the rich tradition of activism that had happened in Detroit. My professor was very impressed with the presentation and the paper I had done proposing African American Male Academy. It was actually modeled a great deal after the high school I went to, which was a college preparatory school for males, but it was not for African American males. It was a predominantly white school (private school). It was only a few of us brothers in there. So I was constantly seeking and searching but through the African Study Cluster, you know, they were introducing

me to names like Carter G. Woodson; *The Miseducation of the Negro*; Jawanza Kunjufu; *Countering Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*; Francis Cress Welsing and *The Isis Papers*. Brothers and sisters in this organization, they were spitting off these names and these books like it was–just like it was second nature and how come you don't know this?

So I would just sit in some of those meetings just dumbfounded at what I did *not* know and had not been exposed to and begin to realize this was the missing link – this was something that we needed as a people. In my Junior year, my sister who was very instrumental in getting me in the college and even getting me to pursue my doctorate, on my winter break she came into my room and she gave me this book by Dr. Na'am Akbar, it's called *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery*. Remember, even though, I was an English major, I did not like reading. So, what compelled her to give me a book I'm not quite sure, but she just handed it to me and said, "You need to read this." I don't even know what made me read it other than she suggested it because I held her in high esteem. But that book answered questions that I never even thought to ask. *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery* and Dr. Akbar has since revised that and it is now called *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery*.

So, once I began to understand from that book why we were in the situation that we are in as a people educationally, economically, psychologically and so forth then I began to try to figure out ways to correct that problem. So for example, in the Black Studies Paradigm we're taught you can't have a critic without a corrective. You can't talk about a problem unless you are going to deal with a solution. So I was constantly trying to figure out what is the solution to this? That is what led me to African-centered Education. Later on in my junior year or senior year, I think it was, I went and got all of

Dr. Na'im Akbar's books and devoured them and then he ended up, as fate would have it, coming to campus and speaking. His speaking was even more dynamic, as much as I loved and devoured his books, he was ever a more dynamic speaker than writer.

So this led me in to looking at the works of Dr. Amos Wilson, *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* and things of that nature. In my senior year, I went to a meeting of the African Studies Cluster, and there was a brother there from New York who was a freshman, and he gave a presentation of Francis Cress Welsing's *The Isis Papers*. This presentation was so dynamic; it was . . . he had clearly prepared for it but it wasn't like he had notes or anything. He was just flipping through the book and talking off the top his head which was amazing to me. I couldn't imagine doing that. I was like this brother doing this as a freshman and I'm about to start student teaching and I haven't . . . I don't feel comfortable speaking in front of people like that.

So that was a serious wake-up call for me. It made me study even more, it made me try to take advantage of opportunities to try to get in front of people and speak. I think I did speak at a conference either my sophomore or junior year about "The Disappearing Black Male Teacher." I had done a paper on that as well. After being exposed to this kind of literature and these ideas, I decided to meet with the Dean of the School of Education at Hampton, at which that time was Dr. Carlton Brown. I made the meeting with him and I went in there with my small little library of books. I think about three to four books; *Miseducation of the Negro*, some of Juwanzi Kunjufu, and Na'im Akbar's books and I asked him, I said, "How come none of these books are a part of our training as educators? We haven't studied anything from educators who look like us and who have the solutions to the problems we face as a people."

He listened very intently to what I said. When I finished and I also told him that I have a friend who is a freshman who is interested in becoming an educator major but I would not want him to become an education major if all he is going to get is the same Eurocentric stream of information that we've been given. So Dr. Brown said . . . he said, "You make a very valid point." He said, "Hopefully by the time your friend that's a freshman becomes a junior some of those books and ideas that you mentioned will be infused into the curriculum. But in the meantime, to continue your studies you should look up some information on a guy down in Atlanta by the name of Dr. Asa Hilliard."

I had heard Dr. Hilliard's name before, but didn't know much about him, just heard his name. So I recognized the name when he said it but I really could not attach it to anything. I didn't know that his scholarship and the path that he laid would tremendously guide a lot of the work that I do. So hopefully that kind of gives you a little bit of the background of how I got interested in African-centered Education, but I noticed when I graduated and became an 8th grade teacher, I couldn't go into the classroom just giving lectures. What transformed me was these lectures and reading these books.

I couldn't go in to a class of 8th graders and lecture every day and expect to get the results of what transformed me. What happened was I realized there was a serious gap between African-centered theory and philosophy and classroom practice. So it was during that first year teaching I realized there needed to be a bridge between the two. That was when I realized that was a big part of my mission and calling was to begin to create African-centered educational materials that teachers and parents could use. So hopefully that gives you some background into how my journey is related to African-centered Education.

M – 03 **Ok now, circling back to that conversation you had with the Dean of the College of Education at Hampton University, are you bridging that gap between theory and practice in the education of upcoming teachers and educational practitioners?**

C – 03 Absolutely! Through my company Imani Enterprises and the Teachers Transformation Institute we provide standards-based and research driven, African centered and culturally relevant, instructional strategies for increasing student achievement. We provide professional development to teachers and to pre-service teachers. So I've been to a number of schools, school districts, colleges and universities doing different presentations, seminars and things of that nature; to help teachers to become more culturally competent in their delivery of services to the students. We do that in a variety of ways.

One of them is through our books. So, I've developed African-centered curriculum resources, for the children directly, but the books that are for the children . . . the way that they are structured, the teacher goes on a journey with the child at the same time. I purposely structured it like that because my rational was most of the teachers are mis-educated as well. I don't say that to be critical like, their mis-educated and I'm not. I mean that I'm still overcoming my mis-education every day, as well. But I say that to say a teacher does not have to have a Master's degree or PhD in Africana Studies in order to teach from my books. Like I said, they are structured in such a way the teacher can go on the journey with the students. So, they are very, very user friendly. A lot of teachers have told me that and let me know how helpful those materials are.

So we have materials for the children and we also have material for teachers and parents directly, as well. We have a book called *Education for Transformation*: *The Keys to Releasing the Genius of African Americans Students*. And then we have a book for parents called *Parent Power: The Keys to Your Child Academic and Social Success*. One of our most recent releases for students and this is primarily for high school and college students' is *Honoring Our Ancestral Obligations: Seven Steps to Black Students Success*. So, we have developed a number of different resources, not only books but also posters. One of the things that we like to share with teachers is that you have to create a climate for transformation. The images that our children see and are fed on a daily basis by way of popular visual media and social media include a great deal of degenerate images; anti-African, anti-human and self-destructive images that portray us in . . . portray black males in gangsterized, and criminalized images and portray black females in objectified and hyper-sexualized images.

And so, the power of images is that these images influence actions. I have seen this over and over in my tenure as a teacher. And so if we know they are getting those kinds of images outside of school so we have to make sure they are getting the proper images of what we would like for them to be at the very least while they are in school. I remember I went into a school to provide professional development up in Connecticut; the school was 60% African American, 40 % Latino and when I looked around on the walls I didn't see any evidence of images that mirrored the children in the seats. In other words, I didn't see any pictures, posters or anything with Black or Latino students. So the issue of the way I explain it is *I can't be what I can't see*. If I'm constantly seeing

images mages of me as a pimp, player, criminal or a thug then I begin to associate those images with what it means to be Black.

And so we created an entire poster line of 30 Black History posters of Black History people, personalities and events. We have 30 of those posters right now that are being used in schools around the country and we are about to release about another 30 or 40 posters with African proverbs on them with the rationale of character development because African proverbs contain the cultural wisdom of the people and it is an easy way to transmit the wisdom and the culture to children. Then we also have a series of DVDs – African origins DVDs; African Origins of Writing Mathematics, African Sacred Science, Majesty of the Moors with African Influence in Early Europe, Wonders of West Africa. So we developed this entire set of curriculum resources that teachers can use to infuse what they're teaching in the classroom.

M – 04 **Now, these African-centered products that you created--are they only for African descendant children? Because you said you went into a school in Connecticut where there were Black students and Latino. So do you get push back from the school boards and administrators because it is African-centered? Is it only for African descendant children or do your curriculum material incorporate other people?**

C – 04 One of the biggest misconceptions about Afrocentricity and African-centered education is that it does not relate to other people and other cultures. While my materials very clearly and directly meet the needs of African students, all students *can and have* benefited from my materials. So I haven't gotten push back from the places where I have been. I think a lot of the places where I've been to speak in schools and school systems

they have come to the conclusion that they don't know how to get the results that they like or they are under fire for not getting results.

And so they have to do something about that. If it is any push back I would say it comes in the form of me not getting booked to speak. So in other words, there are consultants who may get more speaking opportunities, who may get 6- to 7-figure contracts, no questions asked, whereas for somebody like me, that has not been forthcoming yet. I was telling my son recently I said, "If I was able to . . . if the principals and other school personnel who *wanted* my services and were actually able to use my services, I would already literally be a millionaire." So, I don't get the direct push back. If teachers and administrators who sometimes get the push back of having to justify bringing me in, going through all sorts of paperwork; after having submitted the paperwork a school system may say we don't have the money or just flat out no or some type of other excuse or they would just throw pennies at this opportunity to come in.

The work that I do is not free and I understand the value of it so I don't allow myself to be undercut when I know other people are out here doing other works getting paid incredible sums of money. So, to answer your question, the push back doesn't come usually directly at me, the push back comes in the form of either not hiring me to do my consulting services of purchasing the materials or not following all the way through. By that I mean they may bring me in once, but not follow-up. Recently, I started almost mandating that if you bring me in you almost have to bring me in for at least a minimum of three to four engagements, because there has to be follow-up. You know because if you bring me in once, the teachers will enjoy it, they will learn a lot and they will be on

fire, but after a week or two they are going to revert back to what I call the default program.

The default program is the scripted curriculum, you know, business as usual, going along to get along and what they've been doing all along. So, there has to be follow-up in the form of continued professional development. But clearly the presentations that I do are usually with mixed audiences. Ethnicities that are mixed, you have African Americans, Latino, European American, Asian American, I've seen all of that in my seminars. I have received testimonies from people of all backgrounds that these materials, methods and the trainings benefit all people.

M – 05 **Your professional, educational identity has been crafted in a specific type of way which you alluded to when I asked the last question. Could you describe your professional educational identity just a little bit more and how you crafted it in a certain way?**

C – 05 Yes, when I first got into . . . let me back up for a moment, my roommate in college was in the Navy ROTC and he was in training to become a Navy Seal. At that time I had never heard of the Navy Seals, nor did I know anything about them but he subsequently began to tell me that this was an elite force of military officers who would do a lot of covert operations and things of that nature. When he explained that to me it resonated with me from the standpoint that (Chike chuckles) that was what I was doing as an educator. Almost like "special ops" – going behind enemy lines to bring critical information and transformation to our children. And I had to be very meticulous and tactical in doing that in the same way a Navy Seal or Green Beret would have to be very

meticulous and tactical in the way they go about doing what they're doing. So that was my thing.

In my mind I was on a mission and I was not going to let anybody deter me from that mission. My perspective was if the students that I taught did not get it from me [the knowledge of their history, culture, and purpose], then it was highly likely that they would never get it. If they didn't get that from me, I made the assumption that they were never going to have another teacher who would give it to them. That was the kind of intensity and sense of mission that I taught with. Because I wanted to make sure, that they would be able to mark their time; if anybody asked them when did you come into consciousness, when did these things become clear to you? I wanted to make sure that being in my class would be a water-shed moment for them. So at the beginning of my book, *Education for Transformation*, I have letters – a whole series of letters, several dozen letters that my students wrote me over the course of my entire public school teaching career to demonstrate the effectiveness of the teaching, the impact it had on them, in their own words.

So I was very clear that I was on a mission and I have reduced what I do down to these two factors: What I do is for 1) the resurrection of African people and 2) the redemption of humanity; that you can't have one without the other and you can't have the latter without the former. You can't have the redemption of humanity without the resurrection of African people. So everything that I do from the time I wake up in the morning until the time I go to sleep, hinges on those two things.

M – 06 **How does the resurrection of African people and the redemption of humanity lead you to the Florida statute 1003.428? How did you get involved with that particular statute?**

C – 06 In 2005, no I'm sorry 2006 a teacher at my school, came to me, she knew what I was doing, we use to talk, she was a veteran teacher, outstanding. I think she was the Teacher of the Year that year, as well. She was just an outstanding teacher and so we used to talk quite a bit. Her class was down the hall from mine. She told me, she started sharing with me some different people that she knew that I needed to contact; in the hopes that they would purchase my materials and perhaps bring me in to speak. One of them was a gentleman in Florida, with the Commissioner's Task Force on African American History. So she gave me his information and I called, only to find out that he was deceased. But they told me about this meeting that the Task Force was about to have.

So I told them what I did and I may have even sent them a complimentary copy of one of my books or something and the chair of the Task Force said, "Well, we can't pay you to come but I'll tell you what, if you can get here we will cover your hotel room and we will give you 30 minutes to present in front of the Task Force." So, I said great, I jumped at the opportunity because it was amazing to me that they had a Task Force on African American History. I knew of no such think in Georgia and I knew of no such thing in Virginia, because I taught my first 4 years I taught in Virginia. When I got there and sat through the meeting of the Task Force before I presented and then it was made apparent to me that there was actually a *law* in Florida, piece of legislation that *required* the teaching of African and African American History and the contributions and

accomplishments of African and African American people to *all* disciplines (K-12), not just in the history class. Not just one grade level, *all* grade levels and *all* subjects. That absolutely blew me away. What was so astounding about that to me was in my tenure as a teacher I was always looking for safe ground to stand on. In other words, I rarely taught from a teacher's edition, which was one of the reasons I started developing my own curriculum resources, because I knew what they gave me to teach from was insufficient to reach the children.

In doing those things, I needed to have some ground to stand on in case somebody asked me how come you 're not teaching from the books we gave you to teach from or teaching this curriculum – which did happen on more than one occasion. I oftentimes found myself trying to justify why I was teaching what I was teaching. Had I been in Florida I would have had that law to stand on but in Georgia and Virginia, I had no law to stand on other than what I thought was the moral law and the moral compulsion to make sure that our children knew this information because I knew what it did for me in transforming my life, educationally and I knew what it could do for them.

Molefi Asante, refers to this place to stand as a *djed*. A *djed* is a pillar or a strong place to stand in ancient Kemetic architecture as well as philosophy. And so throughout my teaching career, I was looking for a strong place to stand and couldn't find it. So when I found out there was this law in Florida I was like, that would be the perfect thing for me to stand on to justify everything that I do. It was only by the grace of God and the guidance of the ancestors that I feel that I was able to get as far as I did in my teaching career. As a matter of fact my father jokingly would call my sister every year to see if I had gotten my teaching contract renewed because of some of the things he knew that I

was doing in terms of teaching. I'm thankful that I was under some conscious Black educators, administrators who allowed me to do what I was doing.

Many of them I would not regard not as Afrocentric or African-centered but I would say that they were African-*sensitive* in that they saw what I was doing as something that was needed and they knew the results that I got. So, a lot of times they gave me space to operate or to defend me when it was necessary. I was called before the school board or a parent called the school board on me saying I was teaching too much Black stuff at one time. Another occasion I was called into the Principal's office to justify, (it was back in Virginia) it was a Black administrator and they were asking me, "Why are you teaching about Kwanzaa, tell me about the Black Panthers?" They went down the list of things that they found out I was teaching and asked me why I was teaching it? So with the proper legislation I felt like that would be the opportunity for me to stand on something to kind of undergird what I was teaching and why I was teaching it to give me enough of the security to be able to do what I was doing. Now I don't know if that answered your full question, you may have to follow back up.

M – 07 It does, but how did your presentation go and did your presentation lead you to be involved with the dissemination of information or skill sets for the teachers to be able to teach about the contributions of Africans and African Americans?

C – 07 Yes, the conference where I went and presented before the Task Force went very well. In my preparation for that presentation I was like "Wow – if this goes well this could open up the whole state of Florida for me to get this information out to them." That's exactly what it did. My presentation was 30 minutes. They liked what they heard. They got a few of the materials and then they invited me back over the summer. That

meeting was in the spring I believe and they invited me back for their Summer Institute to provide professional development to a group of about 50 teachers. This was up in Quincy, Florida, which is northern Florida not too far from Tallahassee. So, we did a three-hour training (I bought one of my colleagues with me, Tavares Stephens, who is my co-author on the book, *Reading Revolutions Reconnecting the Roots).*

That training went well. I was invited after that over the next 5 to 7 years, I was invited to a number of places in Florida to present. Two or three more of the Summer Institutes of the Task Force I was invited to. Then also, different school districts that were coming to the Summer Institutes (the Task Force Summer Institutes)—they were inviting me to their school districts. It opened up tremendous opportunities for me to do professional development, keynote speeches, and many of the school districts began to purchase a lot of the materials; the books the posters, the DVDs and so forth. It allowed me to expand my list of offerings, as well. Some places invited me back more than once which meant I could not present what I presented before. So I had to expand what I had to offer. It definitely had a tremendous effect on my ability to get the word out to get the information out to the teachers. So that first meeting with the Task Force went very, very well.

One more quick thing – they also contracted with me, the Task Force did, to provide online professional development. The first online segment that they asked me to do was called "African Beginnings." This is one of the significant things about the Florida legislation that's different from any of the other states that have similar types of legislation. When they talk about New York, New Jersey, South Carolina, Illinois all of them deal with African American history for slavery and African Americans. In my

review of the literature and everything surrounding this legislation, Florida appears to be the most comprehensive because in those other states they only deal with teaching history in the social studies classes. They are only interested in African *American* history. Whereas, the Florida legislation is very specific in that it says it is talking about the contributions and accomplishments of *Africans* and African Americans. And not just to be taught in social studies classes but in *all* the classes.

So, they asked me to do a module called "African Beginnings" which is part of an online professional development that teachers can still take in the state of Florida that the Commissioner's Task Force on African American History provides on their web site called "African Beginnings." It is 30 short modules that take them through the historical accomplishments and contributions of ancient African people to all the different subject areas. These are narrated, recorded PowerPoints with all of the evidence-based research that has been done in that area. Then they contracted with me again a couple of years later after that to do a follow-up to that – a chronological follow-up since I did African Beginnings all the way from the Nile Valley civilizations of ancient Kemet, Cush and Nubia to West African civilizations of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. They said, "Chike, now we would like for you to do 'The Middle Passage.'"

So I did a piece, another training module, on the Middle Passage, which taught first about the African influence in early Europe with the Moors and then moved into the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade or what we would properly refer to, as Dr. Marambi Ani teaches us, as the *Maafa*, which is the catastrophic interruption of African civilization and sovereignty by way of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. So that's also what that presentation in front of the Task Force led to, as well.

M – 08 **So do you think that your personal investment in the law as a space to stand, a strong place to stand and the Florida African American History Task Force's economic investment in you and your products – do you think that limits your study or advantages it and if you do, then in what ways?**

C - 08 I definitely don't think it limits the study. I think it's an asset to the study and a great benefit because it will allow me a unique perspective since I've had the opportunity to travel to different schools and school systems in Florida, I've had the opportunity to be in the community. One of the things because this study is grounded in Afrocentric theory one of the things that is very important in African-centered Education is that African-centered scholars or Afrocentric scholars understand how to speak to the community *and* the academy because they are rooted in the community and they also serve in the academy and in the school systems and things of that nature. In going to these different places, I've had the opportunity to interface with people in the community and share their concerns.

One of them that comes to mind in particular which was a very, I don't want to say heated exchange would be the word, but something where there was a lot of community interest and a lot of community opinion was down in South Florida when I was invited to Palm Beach to deal with their issue of having I believe it was either a 22 or 28% Black male graduation rate. They called me in to be the keynote speaker at a community meeting along with their superintendent. Which was a very interesting experience because I was invited by the school board, which in a sense is overseen by the superintendent, the superintendent has some kind of sway with that. I had serious problems with the superintendent. So I was there to speak to the community.

I wasn't there to uphold the status quo of what the superintendent was saying. He was gonna try to justify why things were as they were. I wasn't there to be an apologist for the school system in any way shape or form. As a matter of fact, when I would go to these different places to speak a lot of times once I was able to secure a contract with a school or school system I would then see if I could find somebody in the community so that I could speak directly with the community; which was a case down there, as well. So, my positionality in the delivery of these services and in my personal interest – I think it lends a perspective to the study that would be very difficult to come by had I not had this unique set of experiences.

M – 09 **How are you known outside of Florida for your work in Florida?**

C – 09 I don't know that I'm known for my work in Florida outside of Florida. There are a lot of people who are familiar with my work in Florida but the national or international recognition that I have received is not just the result of what I've done in Florida. I've traveled all over the country. Done work in urban schools and the work that I've done in urban schools was not contingent upon my reputation in Florida. Although, I would let people know about the work that I was doing there.

M – 10 **What was your reputation built upon in those other places you were traveling to and providing services for?**

C – 10 It was built upon – and I don't know if people would articulate it this way – it was built upon the fact that I have built this bridge between African-centered theory and classroom practice. What I would always say if I were to go in to any school where there was a predomination of Black students and at least a good number of Black teachers and do a presentation I would get a lot of *Amen's* or *Ase*'s as I would like to say, with people

who would agree to what I was saying. The problem was people would go back to the default programming of doing what they always did in the absence of having materials that they could take with them and specific strategies.

So I couldn't just come with a deconstructionist approach of just saying what's wrong. Again, the Black Studies paradigm tells us you can't just have a critique without a corrective. You must have the critique that is joined with a corrective. That what separates me from or I guess has afforded me a bit of a reputation for what I do. It's that I created these materials and they have wide spread acceptance from some of the most what you might call hard-core African-centered or Afrocentric to some people who are just kind of being exposed to this information but their saying these are great educational materials however you look at them. So that is what kind of distinguishes what I do and what I bring to the table.

M – 11 Why is this study important to you and is it important to any other stake holders in education?

C – 11 It's deeply important to me because to me it should be a national initiative. Anytime you have such a significant population of African American students and their needs are not being met and the fact that their needs are not being met is very evident in the data, in the achievement data and graduation data and all those different things – there needs to be specific steps that are taken to rectify that situation. Well, many of the measures that have been taken to supposedly meet the need do not take culture into the equation. My premise based on my research and my practice in my observation of Master Teachers across the country who get results in some of the most challenging situations and schools and school systems – my premise based on those observations,

research and my personal practice is that culture is the key. It's the critical mediating factor in increasing student achievement in African American students and in students of color.

There is additional research that shows that when you teach children based on the *best* of their culture that their achievement sky rocket. Asa Hilliard in his chapter of the book, *Young, Gifted and Black*, said there is an achievement gap that nobody is talking about because usually when the achievement gap is talked about it is posed as this gap between Black student achievement and White student achievement." As if White student achievement is the goal or the norm. My contention is that we should not compare Black student achievement to White student achievement especially since White student achievement is mediocre at best. That's not what we are shooting for. We should compare Black student achievement to Black excellence.

Asa Hilliard says in this chapter, in the book, *Young, Gifted and Black*, that the achievement gap that nobody is talking about is that when Black children have three good teachers in a row and by good he means culturally competent teachers in a row; now with three good teachers in a row, *they outperform all other students regardless of socio-economic level*. They outperform White students, they outperform Latino students, and yes, they outperform Asian students, because that's always the question, it's like "Oh my goodness, they outperform Asian students?" They outperform Asian students even when you're talking about poor Black children. When they have *three culturally competent teachers in a row*, they outperform them all. That's the achievement gap that nobody is talking about. It seems like there would be an initiative to make sure we have culturally competent teachers in urban schools.

Well, that hasn't been a priority. So this legislation to me is critical and should be a national initiative that should be passed for all fifty states. Then coming behind it should be the resources so that teachers can be brought up to speed to be able to deliver services so that student achievement can increase for African American students and because all students need to know this body of information, as well. All students need to know it and all teachers need to know it. So I am deeply vested in that legislation because it's a big part of what I've seen missing in my travels across the country and in my particular practice as a public school teacher. It's so needed and necessary and I have seen lives transformed – *tremendously* transformed as a result of being taught African-centered content information with African-centered methods. So I've seen many lives transformed by that but I have seen more lives, infinitely more lives, *deformed* when African-centered methods and materials were *not* in place. So that is one of the reasons why I am so deeply vested into this because I see this as the hinge on which some tremendous changes could be made for the resurrection of African people and redemption of humanity.

M – 12Ok sounds good. That's all the questions that I have.

APPENDIX B: CONTEXTUAL TIMELINE OF ACE ACTIVITISM

This timeline provides an overview of significant events in the quest for Africans in America to develop their own schools, curricula, ideologies and outcomes for the education of African American children. It also offers a chronology significant scholars, organizations, publications and legislation in the African-Centered Education Movement.

1933 Carter G. Woodson publishes *The Miseducation of the Negro*, which would establish the principles that would govern the Afrocentric idea in education.

1939 W.E.B. DuBois publishes *Black Reconstruction in America*, in which he demonstrates that public education for all in the South was the idea of Black people.

1954 George G.M. James writes *Stolen Legacy*, a book which demonstrates that Greek philosophy was actually stolen from Egypt.

1954 The *Brown v. Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas decision is handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

1964 Asa Hilliard becomes superintendent of schools in Monrovia, Liberia.

1966 The Black Student Movement to establish Ethnic Studies/Black Studies at San Francisco State College inspires other student movements around the country.

1966 Maulana Karenga creates Kwanzaa.

1966 The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was formed in Oakland, CA, by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

1967 The Philadelphia Black Student Protest.

1967 In Brooklyn, New York, Ocean Hill/Brownsville Black parents protest over the school curriculum and teachers; they demand community control of schools.

1967 The East Community Center is founded in Brooklyn, out of which is birthed Uhuru Sasa, an African-centered elementary school, and Imani Child Development Center, an African-centered pre-school and feeder school to Uhuru Sasa.

1968 The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther, King Jr. is assassinated.

1968 Dr. Edward Robinson is appointed to the Task Force regarding Philadelphia Black Student Protests.

1968 The Association of Black Psychologists is established.

1969 Dr. Edward Robinson and John Henrik Clarke complete *The World of Africa and Afro Americans,* a separate text to be used in Philadelphia Public Schools. 13,000 copies are printed and distributed but few are used.

1970 Asa Hilliard accepts faculty position at San Francisco State College.

1970 Asa Hilliard becomes a founding member of the National Black Child Development Institute.

1972 The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) is founded to unify African-centered schools around the country.

1974 Cheikh Anta Diop and assistant Theophile Obenga present their research findings regarding the Blackness of the ancient Egyptians at the UNESCO; using rigorous multidisciplinary methods, they rock the foundations of the academy and the world of Egyptology. (Incidentally, it took Diop ten years and *three* separate dissertations to earn his doctorate from the Sorbonne, because his research challenged the cornerstones of western civilization and the intellectual establishment with irrefutable evidence.

1974 Cheikh Anta Diop's *The African Origin of Civilization* is translated and published in English.

1974 The *Journal of Black Psychology* is established

1976 Asa Hilliard writes the introduction to a new re-printing of George G.M. James' classic, *Stolen Legacy.*

1976 Asa Hilliard is an invited lecturer at Georgia State University's "Demythologizing Inner City Children" Conference at the invitation of Dr. James C. Young. At the time, Hilliard is on the faculty of San Francisco State University as the Dean of the School of Education.

197 Ivan Van Sertima releases *They Came Before Columbus: African Presence in Early America,* which becomes a New York Times bestseller.

1976 Black psychologist Na'im Akbar releases *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery.*

1977 Kefa and Bill Jones found the First World Alliance in Harlem with inspiration from Dr. Yosef ben Yochanan.

1979 Van Sertima launches the *Journal of African Civilizations.*

1980 Molefi Asante releases *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change.*

1981: Hilliard is invited to become the Fuller E. Calloway Professor of Urban Education at

Georgia State University.

1981 Hilliard introduces the concept of the *Baseline Essays* to the Portland School District and begins organizing a team of Black scholars to write the essays.

1983 Hilliard convenes the Return to the Source Conference in Atlanta.

1984 The First Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference in Los Angeles at Laney College was convened by Maulana Karenga and Jacob Carruthers.

1984 The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) is founded and formed out of the 1984 Ancient Egyptian Studies Conferences by Drs. John Henrik Clarke, Yosef ben-Jochanan, Asa Hilliard, Jacob Carruthers, Maulana Karenga, and Leonard Jefferies.

1984 Hilliard releases, with Dr. Barbara Sizemore, *Saving the African American Child, a Comprehensive Report for the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE).*

1984 The Nile Valley Conference was convened in Atlanta by Asa Hilliard and Larry Obadele Williams; it was both interdisciplinary and international in scope attracting 2500 people.

1984 Carruthers publishes *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* which includes translation and interpretation of key Kemetic (Egyptian) ideas and ideals.

1984 Karenga publishes *Selections from the Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*.

1984 The South Carolina Black History Law is passed.

1986 Hilliard assists in the production of *Free Your Mind: Return to the Source,* African Origins.

1986 Van Sertima publishes *Great African Thinkers: Cheikh Anta Diop*.

1987 Dr. Edward Robinson publishes *Journey of the Songhai People*.

1987 ASCAC organizes over 1000 Blacks to take a tour of Egypt.

1987 Hilliard writes *The Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest book in the World* with Larry Obadele Williams and Nia Damali.

1987 The Portland (OR) School District releases the *African American Baseline Essays*.

1989 Cheikh Anta Diop's *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* is translated and published in English.

1989 The National Infusion Conference was convened by Asa Hilliard and Lucretia Payton-Stewart in Atlanta.

1990 Karengsa releases *The Book of Coming Forth by Day: The Ethics of the Declarations of Innocence*, which details many of the spiritual and ethical writings of ancient Kemet (Egypt).

1990 The Proceedings from the Infusion Conference are published, edited by Hilliard, Lucretia Payne-Stewart and Larry Obadele Williams.

1990 Through his own Waset Educational Productions, Hilliard produces "Free Your Mind: Return to the Source" and "Master Keys to Kemet" with the assistance of South Carolina Educational TV producer, Listervelt Middleton. Hilliard is also a featured guest with other ACE activists on Middleton's show, "For the People."

1991 Cheikh Anta Diop's *Civilization or Barbarism* is translated and published in English.

1992 Van Sertima releases *Golden Age of the Moor*.

1992 Anthony Browder's *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization* is released.

1994 The Florida law on the infusion of African and African American content in each discipline is passed at the urging of State Commissioner of Education, Doug Jamison.

1995 Hilliard releases *The Maroon Within Us: Selected Essays on African American Community Socialization*.

1995 Theophile Obenga, colleague and research assistant to Cheikh Anta Diop publishes *African Philosophy: The Pharoanic Period: 2730 BC to 330 BC* in English. He translates and gives critical commentary of foundational ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) texts.

2001 Congress passes the No Child Left Behind Act.

2002 New Jersey creates the Amistad Commission (African American History Legislation).

2005 New York and Illinois create their own Amistad Commissions (African American History Legislation).

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Policy Studies at Georgia State University. My dissertation is an examination of Florida Statute 1003.42(h) (African American History Law) which you are knowledgeable about, were involved in creating or helped sponsor during your tenure in the Florida Legislature. In addition, I have provided consulting services to the Task Force and schools throughout Florida for over 10 years to enhance the implementation of this legislation.

I'd like to interview you over the phone to see how this legislation came into being. Do you have availability this Monday or Tuesday evening after 6pm for one hour? If not, please let me know when would be a better time.

Below are the questions I'll be asking about the African American History Legislation. I may add additional questions for clarification based on the response to these:

1. How did you first become involved in sponsoring FL Statute 1003.42(h) [African American History Legislation, 1994]?
2. What is the cultural context that precipitated the drafting and passing of this legislation?
3. What was the policy expected to change with regard to culture in education?
4. Who were the major people who brought this legislation into being? Was the community involved in the process? If so, was their power demonstrated, in your opinion? If so, in what ways?
5. What specific steps were taken to bring this legislation into being and with what consequences (both intended and unintended)?

Thanks so much,

Chike Akua, Doctoral Candidate
Educational Policy Studies
Georgia State University

APPENDIX D: WEBSITE REFERENCES

http://www.afroamfl.org

http://www.nbufront.org/html/BushTelegraph/ACE_SchoolNameContr.html

http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/AfricanAmerican/

http://www.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/mc-me/essays-5.php#afam

http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/481