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Backstage

A Monthly Newsletter from EBRPSS Department of Fine Arts

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www.ebrfinearts.com



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'Science will get us out of this, but the Arts will get us through this'



FINE ARTS

Overview:

- Art Jazz and Pizazz
- EBR Student Short Film Festival
- Forest Heights & Bluebonnet Swamp Center
- Musical Achievement Linked to Performance in Math & Reading
- Celebrating BLACK HISTORY MONTH Lessons, Activities & More for K-12
- February Tech Bites
- Celebrations

EBRPSS Department of Fine Arts' "Backstage" is our EBR School Community monthly email newsletter celebrating all things Fine Arts in the District. During such an unprecedented time in our global community, Backstage is our attempt to stay connected, informed and united as we push forward during this academic year. We welcome celebrations, and newsworthy events for each issue, and encourage you to send information that you would like highlighted. Each issue includes current and past national news articles highlighting education in the Arts. Thank you for your tireless efforts as Arts Educators. Enjoy this issue!



ART, JAZZ, AND PIZZAZZ: Strollin' and Swingin' with EBRPSS Fine Arts!



The date is set.
Mark your calendars now!!!
May 2nd, 2021 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

Visual Arts Teachers: Start collecting student work. Email Susan Arnold when you have work ready to go. She will arrange pick up from your school. Artwork will hang in the SHAW Center lobby, The LSU Museum of Art, The Old State Capitol, The Old Governor's Mansion, The Louisiana Arts and Science Museum, The River Branch Library, and the USS KIDD Museum. Entry to all locations will be free of charge on the day of the show. EBRPSS student musicians and Southern University Jazz Band members will play at four outdoor stages (or inside venues, depending on weather). Teachers are also encouraged to submit work of your own.

The Fine Arts Department would like to announce the 2nd Annual EBR Student Short Film Festival!



Fine Arts teachers, please tell your students about this amazing opportunity to get their work out into the world. This year we are planning to have a virtual edition of the festival, but we need your students' films to make it happen. Students may enter in any of the following categories:

Narrative Short Film with a runtime of 2-8min
Documentary Film with a runtime of 2-8min
Animated Short Film with a runtime of 1-5min

The submission portal will open soon, but now is the time for our students to start planning, developing, and producing their shorts. Your involvement in the festival is encouraged and welcomed! If you would like to get involved in the evaluation and development of the awards show, or if you have any questions then please contact Mr. Wheeler at dwheeler2@ebrschools.org More details will be coming soon!

Forest Heights Academy of Excellence and Bluebonnet Swamp Center's Swamp Art Spectacular



Every year BREC's Bluebonnet Swamp Center holds a Visual Art Show for all artists, ranging from beginners to professional level artists depicting the flora and fauna of our great state. With all the challenges and uncertainty of this year, Visual Art Teacher Katie Sharp and some of her youngest artists decided it was a good time to create some beautiful Louisiana inspired art and participate. Artists Ava Sharp (K), Mia Hunter (Grade 1), Emileigh Hitchens (Grade 1), and Lena Alexander (Grade 3) are proudly representing Forest Heights Academy of Excellence in the Swamp Art Spectacular. Ava Sharp painted a locally found butterfly, Mia and Emileigh's art are mixed-media pieces showing off the beauty of the Louisiana Barn Owl, and Lena Alexander created a stunning watercolor piece of our state bird, the Brown Pelican.

Musical Achievement Could Be Linked To Students' Performance In Math Or Reading

Ava Emsen, Contributor
Forbes

Science

Writing about the overlap of science and art



Could studying music help students in other subjects? Music education researcher Martin Bergee at the University of Kansas was skeptical, so he studied middle school students in several school districts to find out. Much to his surprise, he noticed that students who were good at music also did well at reading at math. But that does not necessarily mean that being musical makes students smarter. It's more complicated than that, and one study alone does not show the full picture.

Over the years, several different studies have either shown that students who practice music do better at other school subjects or find no correlation at all. The reason the results of these studies seem to vary so much is because children don't learn in isolation, so it's difficult to measure exactly how one aspect of their lives influences another. How well they do at school depends on their home life, the type of school, the teachers, their family's socioeconomic background, cultural differences, and so much more. The same factors might influence how well they do in music lessons - or if they even have access to music lessons in the first place.



F Musical Achievement Cont...

Studies that look at whether music influences student learning try to isolate these different factors, and that's what Bergee did here as well. He adjusted for factors such as family income, parents' education, ethnicity and other factors. Even after all that, he noticed that the students who did well in music were more likely to do well in reading and math.

Does that mean that practicing music is a guarantee for academic success? Unfortunately it's not that simple to measure. In a statement for the University of Kansas, Bergee says "It would not be impossible, but really difficult to do a truly definitive study."

Even in his current study, there were some factors out of his control. For example, he wasn't able to study a random sample of middle schools, but had to settle for a selection made by school district administrators. And despite including more than a thousand students in his sample, the group was not very representative of the average American student.

And perhaps most importantly, he had to decide how to measure what "being good at music" actually meant. To be able to assign some sort of value to that, he asked the students to take a short version of a standardized music achievement test. Due to restrictions imposed by some of the schools, there was only an hour available to test the students, and the results of that test would then have to determine the musical ability of each student. But rather than just detecting musical ability, tests like this are also a measure of how well a student does under pressure.

Students who do well on a test like this could be the ones that did well in other subjects simply because they're good test-takers. It's difficult to draw any big conclusions from studies like this. But a safe conclusion to draw is that music shouldn't be overlooked in academia because learning takes place in many different ways. Bergee said that "based on the findings, the point we tried to make is that there might be, and probably are, general learning processes that underlie all academic achievement, no matter what the area is." So it might still be difficult to say whether learning music directly leads to better academic results, but one way or another students benefit from making music.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month. Explore the many contributions of African-Americans with cross-curricular lesson plans, printables, quizzes, and activities below. You'll find great activities and ideas which include biographies of athletes, scientists, civil rights leaders, and more! Utilize these ideas and resources for grades K-12 to examine the historical and social context of slavery. From art to technology, there are activities to connect Black history with every subject including holiday resources for Kwanzaa and Martin Luther King Jr Day.

To incorporate Black History Month into your classes. Click the link below to view resources and cross-curricular activities.

CLICK HERE



Do you, or someone you know, or an organization that you know of, have an acoustic piano - upright, baby grand, grand - that is no longer needed and looking to do something with it? Why not donate it to the EBRPSS so the next generation of students can play it? Contact Glenn Scheuermann at gscheuermann@ebschools.org for more information on how a piano can be donated. PUT THAT PIANO BACK TO WORK!!

DID YOU KNOW?

As we celebrate Black History Month preceded by the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., it's important to recognize how this day became a federal holiday in the first place. It's thanks to public relations pioneer Ofield Dukes (left), who worked with MLK Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders in the 1960s through the 1980s. It was in 1981, 13 years after MLK's death that Dukes, along with Stevie Wonder and Corretta Scott King, launched a campaign, advocating for Congress to make King's birthday an official federal holiday. Dukes worked with Congressman John Conyers to introduce legislation, and two years later, Congress finally passed the bill. In 1983, Pres. Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law. The first official observance of MLK's birthday was held on Jan. 20, 1986, and every January thereafter. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Public Relations, prmuseum.org. For more on the life of Ofield Dukes, see Ofield: The Autobiography of Public Relations Man Ofield Dukes, by Dr. Rochelle Ford and Dr. Unnia Pettus, published by PRMuseumPress.

Ofield Dukes, pictured left with Dr. King, is the late father of our "Backstage" Editor, Roxi Victorian - Dance Director @Mckinley Middle Magnet and Artistic Director of Nyama Contemporary Dance Co.



Ofield Dukes and Martin Luther King Jr. Person in center has a nametag that says Bishop. Place and date unknown.

Band Blooms at Woodlawn Elementary School

There's a new sound in the air on Antioch Dr. – the sound of band instruments. In the 2019 – 2020 school year, Mr. Michael Breaux, band director at Woodlawn Middle School, had an idea: start a band program at Woodlawn Elementary, where none existed. So, with the approval of his principal, Ms. Vanessa Bloss, and the backing of the EBRPSS Fine Arts Department with supplies such as instruments, he set about starting up the Woodlawn Elementary band, currently one of only three elementary schools with a band program in the Parish. Then the Coronavirus pandemic hit in March 2020, shutting all schools down. Undaunted, Mr. Breaux has regrouped for this year, and whereas he had approximately 10 students in the WES Band last school year, he boasts a roster of approximately 40 for this school year.

'While I personally believe in the arts, be it music, art, theatre, or dance, as Principal I am always looking for new opportunities to offer my students, and when Mr. Breaux approached me with his ideas and the backing of the EBRPSS Fine Arts Department, I jumped at the chance', stated WES Principal Ms. Vanessa Bloss.

'As the elementary school level lays the foundation of our District, offering band affords my students the foundation to further their music education with Mr. Breaux for when they move up to middle school. And, my students feel very special having someone from the middle school level coming to teach them here on the elementary level. This has been good for my students.' For more information on how other elementary schools can offer band to their students, please contact Glenn Scheuermann in the EBRPSS Fine Arts Department at gscheuermann@ebschools.org.



It is thought that the earliest historically black college and university (HBCU) band started at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Tuskegee, Ala., with its Tuskegee Normal School Brass Band. Other early black collegiate bands were established at schools like Alabama State, Florida A&M, and Kentucky State.



As American football evolved, so did the college band. Traditionally, many of the first university marching bands were linked to the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and supported by athletic departments; they usually performed military drill exercises. The first marching band to deviate from this was the 1905 University of Illinois band, which formed letters, words, and intricate patterns on the field while playing.



The showmanship and style that are now hallmarks of the black college band occurred by happenstance at a Florida A&M University (FAMU) practice in 1946. "Our first dance routine, I don't know how or why it came about," says Dr. William Foster, FAMU's band director emeritus, who is widely acknowledged as the progenitor of black college band showmanship and is the author of "Band Pageantry: A Guide for the Marching Band." "It was to the tune of 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' We were just doing steps and high-knee lifts, and people thought that was the greatest thing on earth. Later, I had a physical education teacher, Beverly Barber, help with the choreography, putting the steps to music.



By the 1960s, HBCU marching bands had developed a distinctive style and tradition. The FAMU band, as well as bands from schools like Grambling, Southern, and Tennessee State, began to garner national attention. And most recently the Howard University marching band escorted Vice President Kamala Harris during the 2021 Inauguration! Black History Month is a great time to recognize and appreciate the great African American pioneer musicians that changed the landscape of American music.



History of African-American Marching Bands

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Sterling Stuckey, University of California, Riverside, Professor Emeritus, and other historians connect black college band showmanship to influences from 13th-century West Africa and the Egun masqueraders of the Yoruba tribe, who would play musical instruments and dance during funeral processions. Other historians point to black drill sergeants, who introduced both melody and foot-stomping syncopation into their cadence counting, permanently altering the standard, Western marching call.

Black marching bands formed as part of the military, with the earliest musicians serving as fifers, drummers, trumpeters, and pipers in Colonial-era militias.

Around the start of the Civil War, brass instruments became a mainstay in military bands. In the Union Army, each all-black regiment had its own instruments and band, which helped recruit through parades and public appearances.

Many would stay on after the war to form the first black units, while others went on to perform in civilian bands. By the late 19th century, marching bands—including the first permanent black minstrel troupes, with one led by blues pioneer W.C. Handy—had become an integral part of American society. During World War I, many black military units again had bands. Many of these musicians went on to join the faculty of the budding music departments at black colleges and universities, which came about in 1862. The bands were initially formed to help raise money.

Celebrations

Forest Heights Academy of Excellence's Celebration

Visual Art Teacher Katie Sharp and all the members of the FHA Family want to celebrate some of their Visual Artists! Recently Governor John Bel Edwards and his office held an Inclusion Art Contest to show how we are 'Better Together.' FHA had not one, not two, but three students' place. Congratulations to Jacquelyn Batiste (Grade 5) for winning 1st place, Aubrie Thomas (Grade 4) for winning 2nd place, and Dallas Minor (Grade 4) for winning Honorable Mention. We are so proud of your hard work!



BRMHS All State Orchestra Students

The following BRMHS Orchestra students were selected for the 2020 - 2021 Louisiana All-State Orchestra

1st violin

Haotian Tan
Antoni Staszewicz
Helen Wang

2nd Violin

Jonathan Wu
Alan Yan
James Power
Emily Lin

Viola

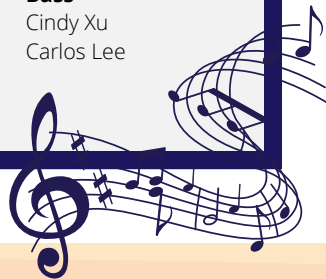
Ashley Belcher
Lanie Wang
Joshua Jackson
Farzeen Wahid

Cello

Celia Watkins
Andrew Wang
Justin Kim

Bass

Cindy Xu
Carlos Lee



Black Futures: Sankofa Series

On February 26th, 2021, *Humanities Amped* and *Metromorphosis* will host a Baton Rouge Black History Month celebration for 6th-12th graders as a part of our Black Futures: Sankofa Series.

"Sankofa" can be translated to mean, "go back to the past and bring forward that which is useful." They are looking for middle and high school students' visual and performing art submissions that both honor Black histories, highlight any of the varying aspects of the present-day Black experience, and/or imagine a Black future.

This work can look like submissions that pay tribute to our ancestors, reflect on the racial tensions of the summer, or depict how you imagine a more hospitable world for Black people, to provide just a few examples. Please be as creative as you want to be!

The deadline for submissions is WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH at midnight

The registering link for groups to participate is below:

<https://forms.gle/oY2iUZF3g7nAnr9>



FEBRUARY TECH BITE



Kahoot!

HOW TO W/Q.BELL
Kahoot is a quiz based platform that kids LOVE!

 Kahoot.com

Make It

Share It



CREATE QUESTIONS

Pre-create your questions



Make an account using your Google



The dashboard is BUSY!!



Click (blue)CREATE in top right corner.



- Add question
- Answer choices
- Image/Video optional (be sure to have these downloaded!)



Adjust time for answering, point value & single select ans.



DONE



Choose TEACH if you want to have students look at your screen while playing in class



Students can see the code and log in.



Start game when ready!!



Group Play



Choose ASSIGN instead of teach when playing



Assign groups & leaders.



Drop the link into the meet chat or in GoGuardian to the leaders



Give them time to complete the Kahoot!

- Feedback is quick and there is a dashboard for reports
- Time to create: 15 mins for newbies; 5 mins if prepared
- Uses: Bellringers, Exit Tickets, Review, Vocabulary

NEWS SPOTLIGHT

Knowing the Past Opens the Door to the Future The Continuing Importance of Black History Month



NATIONAL MUSEUM
of AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY & CULTURE

No one has played a greater role in helping all Americans know the black past than Carter G. Woodson, the individual who created Negro History Week in Washington, D.C., in February 1926. Woodson was the second black American to receive a PhD in history from Harvard—following W.E.B. Du Bois by a few years. To Woodson, the black experience was too important simply to be left to a small group of academics. Woodson believed that his role was to use black history and culture as a weapon in the struggle for racial uplift. By 1916, Woodson had moved to DC and established the “Association for the Study of Negro Life and Culture,” an organization whose goal was to make black history accessible to a wider audience. Woodson was a strange and driven man whose only passion was history, and he expected everyone to share his passion.



Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



Dr. Carter G. Woodson, late 1940s Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

This impatience led Woodson to create Negro History Week in 1926, to ensure that school children be exposed to black history. Woodson chose the second week of February in order to celebrate the birthday of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. It is important to realize that Negro History Week was not born in a vacuum. The 1920s saw the rise in interest in African American culture that was represented by the Harlem Renaissance where writers like Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglass Johnson, Claude McKay—wrote about the joys and sorrows of blackness, and musicians like Louie Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunceford captured the new rhythms of the cities created in part by the thousands of southern blacks who migrated to urban centers like Chicago. And artists like Aaron Douglass, Richard Barthe, and Lois Jones created images that celebrated blackness and provided more positive images of the African American experience.

Woodson hoped to build upon this creativity and further stimulate interest through Negro History Week. Woodson had two goals. One was to use history to prove to white America that blacks had played important roles in the creation of America and thereby deserve to be treated equally as citizens. In essence, Woodson—by celebrating heroic black figures—be they inventors, entertainers, or soldiers—hoped to prove our worth, and by proving our worth—he believed that equality would soon follow. His other goal was to increase the visibility of black life and history, at a time when few newspapers, books, and universities took notice of the black community, except to dwell upon the negative. Ultimately Woodson believed Negro History Week—which became Black History Month in 1976—would be a vehicle for racial transformation forever.

The question that faces us today is whether or not Black History Month is still relevant? Is it still a vehicle for change? Or has it simply become one more school assignment that has limited meaning for children. Has Black History Month become a time when television and the media stack their black material? Or is it a useful concept whose goals have been achieved? After all, few—except the most ardent rednecks - could deny the presence and importance of African Americans to American society or as my then-14 year old daughter Sarah put it, “I see Colin Powell everyday on TV, all my friends—black and white—are immersed in black culture through music and television. And America has changed dramatically since 1926—Is not it time to retire Black History Month as we have eliminated white and colored signs on drinking fountains?” I will spare you the three hour lesson I gave her.

I would like to suggest that despite the profound change in race relations that has occurred in our lives, Carter G. Woodson’s vision for black history as a means of transformation and change is still quite relevant and quite useful. African American history month, with a bit of tweaking, is still a beacon of change and hope that is still surely needed in this world. The chains of slavery are gone—but we are all not yet free. The great diversity within the black community needs the glue of the African American past to remind us of not just how far we have traveled but lo, how far there is to go.

While there are many reasons and examples that I could point towards, let me raise five concerns or challenges that African Americans — in fact — all Americans — face that black history can help address:

The Challenge of Forgetting

You can tell a great deal about a country and a people by what they deem important enough to remember, to create moments for — what they put in their museum and what they celebrate. In Scandinavia — there are monuments to the Vikings as a symbol of freedom and the spirit of exploration. In Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, the Nazis celebrated their supposed Aryan supremacy through monument and song. While America traditionally revels in either Civil War battles or founding fathers. Yet I would suggest that we learn even more about a country by what it chooses to forget — its mistakes, its disappointments, and its embarrassments. In some ways, African American History month is a clarion call to remember. Yet it is a call that is often unheeded

Let’s take the example of one of the great unmentionable in American history — slavery. For nearly 250 years slavery not only existed but it was one of the dominant forces in American life. Political clout and economic fortune depended on the labor of slaves. And the presence of this peculiar institution generated an array of books, publications, and stories that demonstrate how deeply it touched America. And while we can discuss basic information such as the fact that in 1860 — 4 million blacks were enslaved, and that a prime field hand cost \$1,000, while a female, with her childbearing capability, brought \$1,500, we find few moments to discuss the impact, legacy, and contemporary meaning of slavery.

In 1988, the Smithsonian Institution, about to open an exhibition that included slavery, decided to survey 10,000 Americans. The results were fascinating — 92% of white respondents felt slavery had little meaning to them — these respondents often said “my family did not arrive until after the end of slavery.” Even more disturbing was the fact that 79% of African Americans expressed no interest or some embarrassment about slavery. It is my hope that with greater focus and collaboration Black History Month can stimulate discussion about a subject that both divides and embarrasses.

As a historian, I have always felt that slavery is an African American success story because we found ways to survive, to preserve our culture and our families. Slavery is also ripe with heroes, such as slaves who ran away or rebelled, like Harriet Tubman or Denmark Vessey, but equally important are the forgotten slave fathers and mothers who raised families and kept a people alive. I am not embarrassed by my slave ancestors; I am in awe of their strength and their humanity. I would love to see the African American community rethink its connection to our slave past. I also think of something told to me by a Mr. Johnson, who was a former sharecropper I interviewed in Georgetown, SC:

Though the slaves were bought, they were also brave. Though they were sold, they were also strong.



The Challenge of Preserving a People’s Culture

While the African American community is no longer invisible, I am unsure that as a community we are taking the appropriate steps to ensure the preservation of African American cultural patrimony in appropriate institutions. Whether we like it or not, museums, archives, and libraries not only preserves culture they legitimize it. Therefore, it is incumbent of African Americans to work with cultural institutions to preserve their family photography, documents, and objects. While African Americans have few traditions of giving material to museums, it is crucial that more of the black past make it into American cultural repositories.

To read the complete article, visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture Museum website using the link below.

[View Complete Article
www.nmaahc.si.edu](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu)