

## APPENDIX



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*State of New Jersey*  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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ANGELICA ALLEN-McMILLAN, Ed.D.  
*Acting Commissioner*

June 17, 2021

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools,

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) would like to take this opportunity to express support for the integration of the history and contributions of African Americans in academic instruction for students throughout the State. The Department applauds the efforts being made to ensure students have access to comprehensive and diverse instruction on the afflictions and accomplishments of African Americans through the Amistad Curriculum. For many students, the trials and triumphs of African Americans have been limited to Black History Month. While it is important to use this dedicated period to highlight and celebrate such history, the profound impact African Americans have had in the development of the United States warrants much more consideration. The benefits of learning about the significant role of African Americans span beyond students' academic performance and plays an integral role in their overall personal, professional and civic development.

As one of the most diverse states in the nation, the Department continues to provide for an education system that embodies, values, and respects the various cultures that comprise New Jersey's population. The Department continues to work diligently to promote educational outcomes for all students by underscoring the importance of diversity, inclusion and equity in education. Through this commitment, the Department stands ready to work collaboratively with our partners to ensure educators and students are supported in the implementation of Amistad-related instruction in schools across New Jersey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D.".

Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D.  
Acting Commissioner

AAM/SC:gb

**NJEA testimony on Amistad Commission  
Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
June 17, 2021**

**Marie Blistan**

Good morning. I appreciate opportunity to speak with you about the Amistad law and NJEA's ongoing efforts, along with other stakeholders, to implement the law as it was intended. I am here with my fellow officers, Vice President Sean M. Spiller, Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty, as well as key NJEA staff, including our Manager of Human and Civil Rights, Gary Melton, our Director of Government Relations, Al Beaver, and two of our Associate Directors for Professional Development and Instructional Issues, Gabe Tanglao and Dr. Chrissi Miles. Along with many others, they have helped us carry out our work in this area, which has been a top priority for NJEA.

The mandate of the Amistad law is to train and support educators to instruct our students regarding the troubling but important truth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We support that mandate wholeheartedly but have long been concerned that it was not being carried out universally across New Jersey.

With that in mind, in August of 2018, NJEA formed a task force and invited other key stakeholders to participate, including the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the PTA, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Department of Education and, of course, the Amistad Commission, among others. All accepted the invitation, and we came together to figure out how to help more districts implement the Amistad law more effectively.

You have received a copy of our report with recommendations. You will see that the list of stakeholders has grown to include other New Jersey advocates for justice who want to do the right thing for the right reasons. We are grateful for our stakeholder partners who have since joined with us, such as Tom Puryear of the NAACP, Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, representatives of the McGraw-Hill publishing company, and Senate President Steve Sweeney and his staff, who championed the Amistad Award in the Senate.

I want to make a special note here that some of the recommendations from our task force report are being funded by NJEA and some are going to be shared with other stakeholders as we move forward.

At our first meeting, in November of 2018, we drafted a purpose statement: to ensure that students receive an intentional, authentic and inclusive learning experience, which will develop students' academic strengths and cultural sensibilities about the inclusive nature of history and

acknowledge the contributions of Africans and African Americans to U.S. History through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum.

Among our accomplishments so far, I believe one of the most significant was our work with former Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet to add a section to districts' QSAC review process that helps to keep the Amistad Curriculum on the front burner for both local districts and the DOE.

We are proud of what we have accomplished in building a strong foundation even with the pandemic, but we acknowledge now that we also have much more work to do.

At this time, I'd like to ask NJEA Secretary-Treasurer and incoming Vice President Steve Beatty to give an overview of the recommendations from our report.

### **Steve Beatty**

Thank you, Marie, and thank you all for the opportunity to share this work.

Over the course of a number of meetings, our task force identified 12 key recommendations that are listed on Page 17 of the report we have shared with you. I will not read them all, but want to highlight some of our key priorities in those recommendations:

1. To provide extensive and ongoing professional development for educators through NJEA-hosted conferences and events as well as at conferences and events hosted by other members of the stakeholder task force.
2. To partner with higher education institutions to ensure that aspiring educators understand, and are prepared to implement, the requirements of the Amistad law upon entering the profession.
3. To create the Amistad Journey, an opportunity for educators to have an immersive and transformative travel and study experience that includes visits to important historic sites of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. While the pandemic interrupted our plans to launch that program fully, we look forward to doing so as soon as conditions permit.
4. To create an Amistad Award to help elevate, promote and encourage the creative implementation of the Amistad law. We are grateful to Senators Sweeney and Rice for their work in helping to get that passed by the Senate and are hopeful that with the support of Assemblywomen Lampitt, Quijano, McKnight and Jasey that it will soon pass the Assembly and be available for the coming school year.
5. To review and update the Amistad Curriculum, which Dr. Miles will address momentarily.

Before she does, however, I'm pleased to introduce Gary Melton and Gabe Tanglao to speak very briefly about some of the work we have done to move this important work forward.

## **Gary Melton and Gabe Tanglao**

These are undoubtedly challenging topics to address, but we must. That is why we have reached out to educators in other places to learn from them. For example, we have communicated with educators in Germany and South Africa to learn how they have done this sort of educational work regarding the Holocaust and Apartheid. We've begun conversations with them about the challenges and pitfalls, as well as what approaches have worked in those countries to deal with similarly difficult, but important, historical events.

And we've also had people reach out to us. Representatives from textbook publisher McGraw Hill have reached out to discuss their interest in revising future printings of history books to reflect authentic representation of this part of our history.

And we know this work can be done well, with the correct preparation. On our task force, we had educators from Pleasantville and Logan Township, where there were outstanding examples of curriculum development and learning experiences. Their firsthand experience, perspective and expertise helped our task force see what is possible and what can be replicated with the appropriate guidance and resources.

Now, I'd like to introduce Dr. Chrissi Miles to discuss the work we are doing to update the Amistad curriculum.

### **Chrissi Miles**

As Marie and Steve have noted, NJEA has convened a group of exceptional elementary, middle and high school level practitioners to re-envision the Amistad Curriculum. Our work is guided by the *Understanding by Design* framework, aligned to the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and heavily anchored in themes of TRUTH, identity, diversity, justice and action. Through this re-envisioned curriculum, we will intentionally move beyond the mere acquisition of factually and historically accurate content knowledge and toward exploration, meaning-making, and deep transfer of understanding. Our curriculum designs will allow students to demonstrate authentic performance as they explore essential questions such as, *"How do we find truth when some stories are told and others are silenced? Who am I? Why am I? How has where I've come from influenced who I am? How might we explore and express our identities without disrespecting or devaluing the identities of others?"*

This NJEA-funded endeavor has an extremely aggressive timeline that will allow us to release the first phase of K-12 curricular frameworks and resources by late summer 2021. However, curricula must be living and breathing, and the design process never ends. Our design work will continue as we review, refine, and further develop the systems, resources, and supports needed for educator and student success.

Our design work will continue as educators return from the Amistad Journey experience and put their new learning into action. Our design work will continue until our students can independently and critically evaluate social, cultural, political and historical narratives, while questioning distorted representations and challenging assumptions, in order to communicate in

ways that balance power and privilege. Our curriculum design work will break down barriers and ensure representation of the trials and triumphs of historically marginalized peoples, paving the way for the greater inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives across the curriculum.

Now, I'm pleased to introduce NJEA's vice president and incoming president, Sean M. Spiller.

**Sean M. Spiller**

As you can see, we are very serious about the work that we are doing to implement the Amistad law with integrity and with the seriousness that the subject deserves. I am proud that NJEA has led the way to bring other stakeholders to the table. It is our joint responsibility to lead the way not only in helping to get this universally implemented in New Jersey's schools but also to lead the way in the United States on how to thoughtfully and responsibly teach this critical material that all children—and all Americans—must understand.

I commend Marie Blistan for her leadership that got NJEA moving in this direction. I am fully committed to building on that as NJEA continues its growth as a justice-centered union. This is not just a project we are doing around one law or one curriculum. It is a culture shift intended to shape our approach to every issue confronting our schools and our state.

On this Amistad project, we are investing our time, resources and efforts to working with all stakeholders on a shared goal that has gone far too long without this type of attention. We plan to reconvene our task force in early fall to review progress on our recommendations and to continue to build on our shared goal of teaching the full history of the United States, even when that is challenging and uncomfortable. The law requires it, and our students deserve it. We are committed to doing it.

What's more, we are committed to pursuing equity and justice in all areas of public education. We look forward to working with the members of this committee and with all others who share that commitment in order to keep our schools the best in the nation.



# **An Intentional, Authentic, and Inclusive Learning Experience**

## **Teaching Through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum the History of Africans and African Americans in the United States and Their Role in Building This Nation**

**A report of and recommendations from the NJEA Amistad Stakeholders Group**

**June 25, 2020**

NJEA President Marie Blistan  
NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller  
NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty  
NJEA Executive Director Steve Swetsky  
NJEA Deputy Executive Director Kevin Kelleher

# **An Intentional, Authentic, and Inclusive Learning Experience**

## **Teaching Through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum the History of Africans and African Americans in the United States and Their Role in Building This Nation**

Edited by Patrick Rumaker  
Associate Director for NJEA Communications

June 25, 2020

NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group  
180 West State Street  
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*The purpose of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group is to ensure that students receive an intentional, authentic, and inclusive learning experience, which will develop students' academic strengths and cultural sensibilities about the inclusive nature of history and acknowledge the contributions of Africans and African Americans to U.S. history through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum.*

**TO:** The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group, the Leadership for Excellence in Education Group, and the New Jersey Commissioner of Education

**FROM:** NJEA President Marie Blistan

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations from the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group to improve and enhance support for the Amistad mandate

I am pleased to submit to you "An Intentional, Authentic, and Inclusive Learning Experience: Teaching Through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum the History of Africans and African Americans in the United States and Their Role in Building This Nation."

Since it was established in 2002, the New Jersey Amistad Commission has played an essential role in supporting educators to fulfill the Amistad mandate into our schools. Through the commission's resources, conferences, workshops and summer institutes, educators throughout the state have gone back to their districts ready to place African Americans at the center of American history.

While much excellent work has been done, there is so much more to do. That is the conclusion of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group in this report, which offers its recommendations in this report. The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group, initially named the NJEA Amistad Advisory Board, includes coalition of education stakeholders representing educators, parents, school and district administrators, education advocates and the New Jersey Department of Education.

The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group also includes a broad range of NJEA members and NJEA staff representing committees that oversee the association's professional development program and the association's commitment to racial, social, economic and educational justice. The task force also included NJEA members who have taken a lead role in implementing the Amistad mandate in their schools and districts.

In this report, you will find a summary of P.L. 2002, Chapter 75, the law that created the Amistad Commission and its mandate; an overview of the intersection between the work of the Amistad Commission and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS), including its Summer Institute program and its web-based curriculum; and recommendations from the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group to move the Amistad mandate forward.

In Appendix 1 you'll find published articles about an exciting educational opportunity, The Amistad Journey. Appendix 2 provides a listing of key performance expectations in NJSLS-Social Studies, as

adopted by the State Board of Education on June 3, 2020, that have direct relevance to the Amistad mandate, while being mindful that the Amistad mandate can and must be implemented beyond social studies and integrated into all curricula.

On behalf of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group, I want to extend our sincere thanks to the legislators who enacted the Amistad Law and to the Amistad Commission for its advocacy, training, and resources to help educators successfully implement the law. I also thank New Jersey Commissioner of Education Lamont Repollet both for his advancement of the Amistad mandate and for updating the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) to include a requirement for evidence of teaching in accordance with the Amistad mandate. I wish to extend a special thank you to those who joined the NJEA Stakeholder Group, Chair Brenda Brathwaite and Staff Contact Gary Melton, Assistant Colleen Stevens, former NJEA Executive Director Ed Richardson, NJEA Editor Patrick Rumaker, Executive Assistant Shannon Pellegrino, and the thousands of educators across New Jersey who place Africans and African Americans at the center of American History.

*Marie Bliston*

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# Chapter 75: Establishing the Amistad Commission

**“An Act establishing the Amistad Commission and supplementing Chapter 16A of Title 52 of the New Jersey Statutes.”**

On Aug. 28, 2002, P.L. 2002, Chapter 75 (Ch. 75), which established the Amistad Commission, was signed into law by Gov. James McGreevey. The General Assembly bill, A-1301, which led to Ch. 75, was sponsored by General Assembly members William D. Payne and Craig A. Stanley. A-1301 had 30 additional co-sponsors. Its Senate companion, S-1004, was sponsored by Sens. Shirley K. Turner and Joseph A. Palaia and had three additional co-sponsors. The legislation enjoyed nearly unanimous bipartisan support. A-1301 has passed by a vote of 78-1; S-1004 passed by a vote of 39-0.

The legislation initially created a 19-member Amistad Commission. The commission would include:

- The New Jersey secretary of state or designee, who would chair the commission.
- The New Jersey commissioner of education or designee, who would serve as vice chair.
- The chair of the Presidents' Council or designee.
- Sixteen members of the public.

In 2004, four Legislators were added as nonvoting members—two members of the Assembly who are not of the same political party and two members of the Senate who are not of the same political party.

The Amistad Commission is named in honor of a group of enslaved Africans, led by Joseph Cinque who while being transported in 1839 on a vessel named the Amistad, gained their freedom by overthrowing the crew and eventually having their case successfully argued before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ch. 75 specifically tasked the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) with the following responsibilities:

- Assisting the Amistad Commission in marketing and distributing to educators, administrators and school districts educational information and other materials on the African slave trade, slavery and vestiges of slavery in the U.S., and the contributions of African Americans to our society.
- Conducting at least one teacher workshop annually on the topics above.
- Assisting the Amistad Commission in monitoring the inclusion of materials and curricula in the state's educational system.
- Consulting with the Amistad Commission to determine ways it may survey, catalog and extend education on the slave trade and American slavery that at the time the law was enacted were to be incorporated into the Core Curriculum Content Standards, now known as the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Ch. 75 specifically tasked the Amistad Commission with the following responsibilities:

- Assisting and advising public and nonpublic schools in the implementation of education, awareness programs, textbooks and educational materials concerned with the African slave trade, slavery and vestiges of slavery in the U.S., and the contributions of African Americans to our society.
- Surveying and cataloging the extent and breadth of education in the above presently being incorporated into the curricula and textbooks and taught in our schools; inventorying those African slave trade, American slavery, or relevant African American history memorials, exhibits and resources that should be incorporated into courses of study; assisting the NJDOE and the New Jersey Department of State and other state and educational agencies in the development and implementation of education programs concerning the African slave trade, American slavery and African American history.
- Acting as a liaison with textbook publishers, public and nonpublic schools, public and private nonprofit resource organizations, members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the state Legislature to facilitate the inclusion of the history of African slavery and of African Americans in the curricula of U.S. public and nonpublic schools.
- Compiling a roster of individual volunteers willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars, and workshops.
- Coordinating events memorializing the African slave trade, American slavery and the history of African Americans in overcoming the burdens of slavery, and its vestiges; seeking volunteers to participate in commemorative events that enhance student awareness of the significance of the African slave trade, American slavery, its historical impact, and the struggle for freedom.
- Preparing reports for the governor and the Legislature regarding findings and recommendations on all of the above.
- Developing, in consultation with the NJDOE, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of information on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in the U.S., and the contributions of African Americans to the U.S. The law further directed that every board of education incorporate the information in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary students.
- Soliciting, receiving and accepting appropriations, gifts and donations.

# NJSLS and the Amistad Commission

At the time that Ch. 75, the law creating the Amistad Commission was passed, curricula in New Jersey was guided by the Core Curriculum Content Standards. These have since been replaced by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS).

In addition to its many activities and initiative, the New Jersey Amistad Commission develops and executes professional development programs for educators and administers two websites with resources for educators. One website is hosted on the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) website and the other is the Amistad Web-Based Curriculum.

## Summer Institutes

The regional residential four-day Summer Institutes developed by The Amistad Commission immerse participants in an intensive study of material relative to the Amistad mandate. The aim of the program is to teach additional methodological and pedagogical techniques, while looking at special topics in history in order to fulfill the mandates of the statute that created the Amistad Commission.

In 2018, the institutes hosted at Kean and Rowan universities centered on the theme "Civil Rights and the Schoolhouse: A Historiography of American Educational Policy Implications on Students and Teachers." The four-day institute traced the civils rights battles from the colonial/antebellum era through to the civil rights era and the 21<sup>st</sup>-century.

Using primary and secondary sources, institute participants examined the role of parental advocacy, the development of educational facilities, the evolution of curriculum development and educational policy. Against a judicial backdrop of the U.S. Constitution and 20<sup>th</sup>-century civil rights cases, the institute focused on the still-evolving narrative of events surrounding landmark legal decisions in relation to African Americans, which has influenced national educational policy and its legacy.

Potential participants, from public and nonpublic schools, apply to attend the institute by completing an application and submitting an essay. Participants must demonstrate a likelihood to benefit professionally and translate the institute experience into the classroom or to implement districtwide curricular adoptions.

In addition, a selection committee weighs several factors, including:

- Quality and commitment as an administrator, teacher or interpreter of American history.
- Intellectual interests, both generally and as they relate to the work of the institute.
- Special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the institute.
- Commitment to participate fully in the formal and informal collegial life of the institute.
- The likelihood that the experience will enhance the applicant's teaching and the ability for the applicant to infuse African American history into the social studies curriculum.

In 2018, applicants received a \$250 stipend upon submission and approval of five lesson plans that were due by the middle of the September following the institute.

The 2016 Summer Institutes, also hosted at Kean and Rowan universities, examined the transition period from slavery forward, focusing on the Reconstruction Era, Harriet Tubman, the Freedman's Bureau, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Great Migration.

## Department of Education hosted website

The Amistad Commission's home on the NJDOE website can be found at [state.nj.us/education/amistad](http://state.nj.us/education/amistad). The commission's homepage offers an immediate historical lesson. At the time of the writing of this report an article titled "Raye Jean Montague Broke Barriers as Arkansas' Own 'Hidden Figure'" was featured.

In addition to a link to the interactive curriculum discussed below, the page offers a variety of tabs to click through.

- Teacher resources: This space provides a position paper titled "The Amistad Commission's Literacy Components for Primary Grades." The paper reports on the lack of significant representation of Africans and African Americans in literature found in the primary grades. To address this, the paper offers an extensive list of titles for kindergarten through Grade 5. Publication dates range from 1969 to 2007.
- Events and trainings with access to registration.
- Access to registration for the Amistad Commission's Residential Summer Curriculum Institutes.
- Access to registration for the Malcolm Bernard Historically Black Colleges and Universities College Fair.
- Access to nomination for the New Jersey Rising Scholars Recognition Award: New Jersey public high school seniors are eligible to be nominated and must meet certain cumulative GPA and SAT/ACT standards.
- Teaching History Through Film: A news item about a private screening of the film "Selma," for the former U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that was attended by members of the Amistad Commission in January 2015.
- A link to contact the Amistad Commission.

## Amistad Web-Based Curriculum

Developed through a collaboration between the Amistad Commission and CICERO Systems, the website for the commission's interactive curriculum can be found at [njamistadcurriculum.net](http://njamistadcurriculum.net).

At the outset, the commission declares that its mission is not to "introduce African American history into the K-12 curriculum and to develop public programs on African American history for children, families, and communities," but rather, "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.”

The commission challenges the idea that to add the study Africans and African Americans, educators must leave out other events and people.

“The Amistad Commission’s revolutionary goal is to demonstrate that everyone on the national stage not only plays a major role, but also the lives of the powerful and the less powerful are intertwined, sometimes interdependent, and sometimes these roles are reversed when the meek inherit the earth,” the mission statement reads.

The commission affirms, however, the need to also offer separate sub-courses in U.S. history on African Americans.

“As in other sub-fields—women’s history, labor history, and ethnic histories—in African American history, scholars interpret the human story from within the African American experience, and through that particular lens, scholars reveal universal truths about the human experience.”

### **English Language Arts**

Quick links are provided at [njamistadcurriculum.net](http://njamistadcurriculum.net) to help curriculum developers and other educators to align instruction with the mandates of Ch. 75 and NJSLS. The English Language Arts (ELA) section, is divided into two parts: literature resources and informational text resources.

The literature resources section is divided by genre to provide, according to the commission a “unique resource opens new doors of opportunity to explore and develop colorful imagery of the great world around us.” The genres include fables, fairy tales, folklore, historical fiction, poetry, science fiction, and short stories. While various cultures are represented among the selections in each genre, there are comparatively few from African or African American culture. This section of the website would benefit from an inventory of its current holdings and an infusion of additional titles.

The information text section is divided into biographies, chronologies, connections, correspondence, essays, landmark documents, memorials, quotations, and speeches. The dozens of selections available in most sections provide a range of resources—for example there are 82 biographies of individuals from a diversity of backgrounds—but the selections should be reviewed in light of current scholarship regarding Eurocentric bias. For example, the biography of Tisquantum (Squanto) reads, in part, “...an explorer landed in Plymouth Colony, changing Squanto’s life forever. He took Squanto to England. He became friendly with Europeans. Squanto came back to North America to help the Pilgrims.”

### **Social Studies**

There are 13 units of study provided in the Amistad Curriculum website:

1. Social Studies Skills
2. Indigenous Civilizations of the Americas

3. Ancient Africa
4. The Emerging World (Native Americans, Africans, Europeans)
5. Establishment of a New Nation – Independence to Republic
6. The Constitution and the Continental Congress
7. The Evolution of a New Nation State
8. The Civil War and Reconstruction
9. Post-Reconstruction and the Origins of the Progressive Era
10. America Confronts the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the Emergent Modern America
11. America in the 1920s and 1930s; Cultural Political, and Intellectual Development – The New Deal, Industrialization, and Global Conflict
12. America in the Aftermath of Global Conflict: Domestic and Foreign Challenges, Implications and Consequences – The Era of Reform
13. National and Global Debates, Conflicts, and Developments – America Faces the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Each unit contains subsections titled introduction, activities, assessments, essentials, gallery, griot, library, links, rubrics and tools. The materials include historical overviews, lesson plans, PowerPoints, interactive maps, timelines, primary source documents, audios, videos and music. Griot is a reference to the traveling poets, musicians, and storytellers who maintain a tradition of oral history in parts of West Africa.

# Recommendations from the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group

## Background

In September of 2018, NJEA President Marie Blistan met with the Leadership for Excellence in Education (LEE) Group to discuss the implementation of Amistad Law. The LEE group is composed of the following organizations:

- New Jersey Association of School Administrators
- New Jersey Association of School Business Officials
- New Jersey Department of Education
- New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)
- New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
- New Jersey PTA (NJPTA)
- New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA)

On Nov. 27, 2018, NJEA hosted a meeting of what was to become the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group, where a review of the Amistad Law was completed. At that meeting, Dr. Stephanie James Harris, executive director of the New Jersey Amistad Commission, presented a tutorial on the commission's web-based interactive curriculum. The group organized itself as the NJEA Amistad Advisory Board, later named the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group.

Gary Melton, an associate director in the NJEA Executive Office, then led an exercise with a New Jersey Student Learning Standard for Social Studies. The standard, 6.1.12.A.10.c, falls within the context of the New Deal and reads, "Evaluate the short- and long-term impact of the expanded role of government on economic policy, capitalism, and society."

In four groups, participants unpacked the standard using literature with historic content from an Afro-centric viewpoint. Melton's purpose was to show that the Amistad Curriculum could be implemented beyond social studies and integrated into other curricula. (Note: in the revised standards approved on June 3, 2020, the counterpart to the standard examined by Melton is Standard 6.1.12.EconEM.10.a: "Construct a claim that evaluates short- and long-term impact of the expanded role of government on economic policy, capitalism, and society.")

A subsequent meeting was held on Feb. 28, 2019. Gabriel Tanglao and Christine Miles, NJEA associate directors for Professional Development and Instructional Issues, designed and hosted a discussion in a world café format. A world café is a structured conversational process for hosting large group dialog. (See *theworldcafe.com*.) From the discussion the group developed this statement of purpose:

*The purpose of the Amistad Advisory Board is to ensure that students receive an intentional, authentic, and inclusive learning experience, which will develop students' academic strengths and cultural*

*sensibilities about the inclusive nature of history and acknowledge the contributions of Africans and African Americans to U.S. history through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum.*

At a meeting on Oct. 7, 2019, the Amistad Advisory Board approved its statement of purpose. Brenda Brathwaite delivered a presentation that chronicled the history of racial injustice in the United States. Tamar Lasure-Owens, a first-grade teacher at Leeds Avenue Elementary School in Pleasantville, provided a PowerPoint presentation on how the Amistad Curriculum is implemented schoolwide from kindergarten through fifth grade. The presentation focused on the trans-Atlantic slave trade to both North and South America, the Indigenous groups of those areas, and how Latin American countries celebrate and recognize their African roots. Lasure-Owens' presentation gave classroom examples—including maps and timelines—on how to infuse the Amistad Curriculum into English language arts (ELA), read-alouds, writing and math.

On Friday, Nov. 8, 2019, at the NJEA Convention in Atlantic City, NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group Chairperson Brenda Brathwaite and then-NJEA Executive Director Ed Richardson unveiled the Amistad Journey. The journey will include opportunities for New Jersey educators to visit sites significant to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in Africa and the United States.

Also speaking at the announcement were Gov. Phil Murphy, Commissioner of Education Lamont Repollet, and NJEA President Marie Blistan. They were joined by Dr. Cornel West who had delivered the convention's keynote address prior to the announcement and the members of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group. Richardson credited NJEA Executive Committee member Jacqui Greadington with suggesting the journey, which is modeled on a program run by the New Jersey Holocaust Commission that takes educators to historic sites of the Holocaust in Europe.

Finally, Brathwaite and Richardson provided an update on work of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group and announced that it would be developing a report that would offer recommendations to move forward the vision of the Amistad mandate.

## **Recommendations**

The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group continues to evaluate the Amistad Commission's websites to offer suggestions for streaming information by grade level, updating the resource list, and improving navigation. The members of the group are planning to develop workshops for their respective constituencies.

The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group hopes that districts will not need punitive consequences through the Quality Single Accountably Continuum (QSAC) to implement the Amistad mandate, but would rather see the need to develop their own standards and curricula to reach the law's goal of educating students about the contributions of Africans and African Americans to American and world history. By doing so, districts will demonstrate that social studies is a vital and central part of school curricula and should be recognized as an equally valued subject that is given current curriculum resource tools for both students and teachers.

To that end, the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group submits the following recommendations to ensure implementation of the Amistad mandate:

- a. Develop relationships with organizations that hold educational and advocacy conferences, including, but not limited to the NJEA, NJSBA, NJPTA, NAACP, the New Jersey Black Issues Convention, and The Latino Institute.
- b. Develop workshops through the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division.
- c. Reinstate and expand upon an Amistad Recognition Award, through the NJDOE.
- d. Use educator publications, such as the *NJEA Review* and *Educational Viewpoints*, to promote Amistad education.
- e. Develop relationships with college and university educator preparation programs.
- f. Ensure that the goals of the Amistad mandate are embedded in the courses of study in educator preparation programs.
- g. Explore existing college-based educator programs for models of successful ventures and lessons learned from less successful ventures.
- h. Seek insights of and participation of those preparing to enter the teaching profession.
- i. Explore the development of middle and high school pilot programs.
- j. Review and revise, as needed, the Amistad Commission's web-based interactive curriculum.
- k. Create and implement the Amistad Journey through a collaboration of the NJDOE and NJEA.
- l. Reconvene the Amistad Task Force in June 2021 to review implementation.

# Appendix 1

## The Amistad Journey

Below are two articles relative to the Amistad Journey that were published in the NJEA Review at on [njea.org](http://njea.org).

### NJEA to support Amistad Journey program

**Blistan, Murphy and Repollet make joint announcement at NJEA Convention**

*(Published at [njea.org](http://njea.org) on Dec. 1, 2019 and in December 2019 edition of the NJEA Review)*

Gov. Phil Murphy joined NJEA President Marie Blistan, New Jersey Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet, members of the Amistad Stakeholder Group and other educational leaders and advocates at the NJEA Convention in Atlantic City to highlight the work to integrate New Jersey's Amistad Curriculum more deeply into New Jersey's public schools and to announce an exciting new opportunity for New Jersey educators.

The announcement followed a rousing keynote address by scholar and civil rights advocate Dr. Cornel West. After praising West for his challenging remarks, Blistan said, "we all know that the work of racial justice is hard, but it's far too important to let that stop us. We need to take challenges like what Dr. West presented us with today and turn that into real action for real justice for our students, our state and ourselves."

Blistan pointed to the work of the Amistad Stakeholder Group.

"Though the law establishing the Amistad Commission has been in place for 17 years, and much work has been done by educators to bring the Amistad Curriculum into our schools, we believe there is more that can be done," Blistan said. "This group of advocates is committed to elevating the importance of that curriculum. We are working to ensure that it is taught—and emphasized—in every public school in New Jersey."

Amistad Stakeholder Group chair Brenda Brathwaite, an Atlantic City teacher, shared the groups statement of purpose: "...to ensure that students receive an intentional, authentic, and inclusive learning experience, which will develop students' academic strengths and cultural sensibilities about the inclusive nature of history, and acknowledge the contributions of Africans and African Americans to U.S. History through New Jersey's Amistad Curriculum."

"With that as our core principle, we have begun to develop a set of recommendations that we will be sharing with the Amistad Commission," Brathwaite said.

## The Amistad Journey

Ed Richardson, NJEA's outgoing executive director, announced the creation of the Amistad Journey, a program designed to allow educators to travel to some of the historic sites of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Richardson credited NJEA Executive Committee member Jacqui Greadington with suggesting the journey, which is modeled on a similar program run by the New Jersey Holocaust Commission that helps educators visit historic Holocaust sites.

"The Amistad Journey will include opportunities for educators to visit sites in Africa," Richardson said. "But the history of slavery in America did not begin and end in Africa. In fact, after ending the practice of forcibly bringing people to America, the enslavement of African Americans continued here for 150 years. And so the Amistad Journey will also include experiences for educators in the United States."

Repollet shared some of his own experiences traveling to those sites with students and how powerful and valuable that experience was.

"The department is committed to better ensuring that every school and district has the resources needed to honor the promise of the Amistad Commission to embed African American history in their curricula," Repollet said. "We are committed to using every tool at our disposal to make that promise real."

Murphy, who came to the NJEA Convention to participate in the Amistad announcement, praised all the groups that had worked to elevate the Amistad Curriculum and create the Amistad Journey.

"The contributions of our African American community to our state, and to our identity as New Jerseyans, are immeasurable," Murphy said. "I applaud the Amistad Stakeholder Group and their efforts to create the Amistad Journey to ensure that our students learn about the history of African Americans and their fight for social justice that helped shape New Jersey, and this nation."

In addition to NJEA and the New Jersey Department of Education, other groups participating on the Amistad Stakeholder Group include:

- New Jersey Association of School Administrators
- New Jersey Association of School Business Officials
- New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
- New Jersey PTA
- New Jersey School Boards Association
- New Jersey Amistad Commission

Information will be forthcoming for educators interested in participating in the Amistad Journey.

## **NJEA donates \$75,000 to fund Amistad Journey**

*(Published at [njea.org](http://njea.org) on March 4, 2020 and in April 2020 edition of the NJEA Review)*

The New Jersey State Board of Education today unanimously accepted a \$75,000 donation from NJEA to fund the Amistad Journey, a program that will enable educators to travel to historic sites of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade in the United States and Africa. The Amistad Journey will be administered through the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. The commission, created through legislation passed in 2002, is a 23-member body charged with ensuring that African American history, contributions and experiences are taught in New Jersey's classrooms.

The Amistad Journey resulted from the work of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder group, which was initially convened by NJEA President Marie Blistan in September 2018. The purpose of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder group is to ensure that students receive an intentional, authentic and inclusive learning experience that will develop students' academic strengths and cultural sensibilities about the inclusive nature of history and acknowledge the contributions of Africans and African Americans to U.S. history through the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum.

The stakeholders group has studied what has been done and will soon report recommendations for what can and must be done to fully implement the law.

The intention of the Amistad Journey is to further enhance educators' ability to deeply integrate Black history into every element of the curriculum. In addition to NJEA and the New Jersey Department of Education, groups participating on the Amistad Stakeholder Group include:

- New Jersey Association of School Administrators
- New Jersey Association of School Business Officials
- New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
- New Jersey PTA
- New Jersey School Boards Association
- New Jersey Amistad Commission

NJEA Associate Director Gary Melton Jr. represented Blistan at today's State Board of Education meeting as the board voted to accept the association's donation.

"The Amistad Journey is going to be a strong component for our educators in this work, which will ultimately benefit students," Melton said. "This is a change agent in the world of education that will make our world a better place."

On behalf of Blistan, Melton thanked former NJEA Executive Director Ed Richardson for his support and early work with the Amistad Journey and Jacqui Greadington, a long-time NJEA leader, who advocated for the importance of the journey experience.

With this infusion of funds, the NJDOE will now move forward with developing the application process for the Amistad Journey.

## **Appendix 2**

### **NJSLS Social Studies and the Amistad Law**

The current New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for Social Studies were adopted by the State Board of Education on June 3, 2002. The standards set forth grade-band expectations for social studies skills and content by the end of Grade 2, the end of Grade 5, the end of Grade 8 and the end of Grade 12. The introduction to the social studies standards explicitly states that “there are performance expectations which reflect the Amistad and Holocaust mandates in all grade bands.”

The NJSLS-Social Studies also reference N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 2, which requires two years of U.S. History in high schools including history of New Jersey and of African Americans. It further references N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88, which states that every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

In the standards, significant historical events and cultural and civic milestones with explicit reference to Africans and African Americans are focused upon at various points in the draft, including, but not limited to the core ideas and performance expectations listed here. However, the central role of Africans and African Americans in the history of the United States inspire opportunities for inclusive educational experiences in virtually every element of the standards.

#### **6.1 US History: America in the World**

##### **Grade Band 3-5**

##### **History, Culture, and Perspectives: Continuity and Change**

**Core idea: Interactions of people and events have shaped the world we experience today.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.4: Use evidence to document how the interactions among African, European, and Native American groups impacted their respective cultures.
- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.11: Make evidence-based inferences to explain the impact that belief systems and family structures of African, European, and Native American groups had on government structures.

##### **History, Culture, and Perspectives: Understanding Perspectives**

**Core idea: Events may be viewed differently based on one's perspective.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.2: Compare and contrast forms of governance, belief systems, and family structures among African, European, and Native American groups.

#### **Civics, Government and Human Rights: Democratic Principles**

**Core idea: Fundamental rights that allow democratic societies to function can be seen at all levels of government in society.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.5.CivicsDP.2: Compare and contrast responses of individuals and groups, past and present, to violations of fundamental rights (e.g., fairness, civil rights, human rights).

#### **Civics, Government and Human Rights: Human and Civil Rights**

**Core idea: It is the responsibility of individuals and institutions at the state, national, and international levels to promote human rights.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.5.CivicsHR.1: Describe how fundamental rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights contribute to the improvement of American democracy (i.e., freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition, the right to vote, and the right to due process).
- 6.1.5.CivicsHR.2: Research and cite evidence for how the actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other historical civil rights leaders served as catalysts for social change, inspired social activism in subsequent generations.
- 6.1.5.CivicsHR.3: Cite examples from a variety of sources to describe how national and international leaders, businesses, and global organizations promote human rights and aid individuals and nations in need.

#### **Geography, People and the Environment: Human Population Patterns**

**Core idea: The experiences people have when they migrate to new places differs for many reasons, including whether it is by choice or condition.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.5.GeoPP.6: Compare and contrast the voluntary and involuntary migratory experiences of different groups of people and explain why their experiences differed.

#### **Grade Band 6-8**

#### **Era 3. Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)**

**Core idea: The United States system of government is designed to realize the ideals of liberty, democracy, limited government, equality under the law and of opportunity, justice, and property rights.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.8.CivicsDP.3.a: Use primary and secondary sources to assess whether or not the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period.

#### **Era 4: Expansion and Reform**

**Core idea: Fundamental rights are derived from the inherent worth of each individual and include civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a: Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period.

**Core idea: A national economy includes studying the changes in the amounts and qualities of human capital, physical capital, and natural resources.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.8.EconNE.4.b: Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people and explain the outcomes that resulted.

#### **Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction**

**Core idea: Historical contexts and events shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.b: Examine the roles and perspectives of various socioeconomic groups (e.g., rural farmers, urban craftsmen, northern merchants, and southern planters), African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution, and determine how these groups were impacted by the war.
- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.5.a: Analyze the effectiveness of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution from multiple perspectives.
- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.5.b: Examine the roles of women, African Americans, and Native Americans in the Civil War.
- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.5.c: Explain how and why the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address continue to impact American life.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments are shaped by social, political, cultural, technological, and economic factors.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.5.e: Compare and contrast the approaches of Congress and Presidents Lincoln and Johnson toward the reconstruction of the South.
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.5.f: Analyze the economic impact of Reconstruction on the South from different perspectives.
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.5.g: Construct an argument that prioritize the causes and events that led to the Civil War using multiple sources from different perspectives.

**Grade Band: 9-12**

**Era 2. Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)**

**Core idea: To better understand the historical perspective, one must consider historical context.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.a: Using primary sources, describe the perspectives of African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution and assess the contributions of each group on the outcome of the war.
- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.b: Analyze the impact and contributions of African American leaders and institutions in the development and activities of Black communities in the North and South before and after the Civil War.
- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.c: Explain why American ideals put forth in the Constitution have been denied to different groups of people throughout time (i.e., due process, rule of law and individual rights).

**Era 4. Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)**

**Core idea: Democratic principles concerning universal human rights, concepts of equality, and the commitment to human freedom are commonly expressed in fundamental documents, values, laws, and practices.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.a: Compare and contrast historians' interpretations of the impact of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments on African American's ability to participate in influencing governmental policies.
- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.b: Analyze how ideas found in key documents contributed to demanding equality for all (i.e., the Declaration of Independence, the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Gettysburg Address).

**Core idea: Complex interacting factors influence people's perspective.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.4.b: Use primary sources to compare and contrast the experiences of African Americans who lived in Union and Confederate states before and during the Civil War.

#### **Era 5. The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)**

**Core idea: Social and political systems throughout time have promoted and denied civic virtues and democratic principles.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.5.a: Analyze the effectiveness of governmental policies and of actions by groups and individuals to address discrimination against new immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans.

#### **Era 6. The Emergence of Modern America: Progressive Reforms**

**Core idea: Social and political systems throughout time have promoted and denied civic virtues and democratic principles.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.a: Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to document the ways in which women organized to promote government policies designed to address injustice, inequality, and workplace safety (i.e., abolition, women's suffrage, and the temperance movement).
- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.b: Relate the creation of African American advocacy organizations (i.e., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) to United States Supreme Court decisions (i.e., Plessy v. Ferguson) and state and local governmental policies.

#### **Era 7. The Emergence of Modern America: World War I (1890-1930)**

**Core Idea: Advancements in technology, investments in capital goods, and human capital increase productivity, economic growth, and standards of living.**

Performance Expectations:

- 6.1.12.EconNM.7.a: Assess the immediate and long-term impact of women and African Americans entering the work force in large numbers during World War I.

#### **Era 8. The Great Depression and World War II: World War II**

**Core Idea: Human rights serve as a foundation for democratic beliefs and practices.**

**Performance Expectations:**

- 6.1.12.CivicsHR.8.a: Analyze primary and secondary sources to explain how social intolerance, xenophobia, and fear of anarchism led to restrictive immigration laws and refugee, and the violation of the human rights of individuals and groups.

**Core idea: Advancements in technology and investments in capital goods and human capital increase economic growth and standards of living.**

**Performance Expectations:**

- 6.1.12.EconNM.8.a: Analyze the push-pull factors that led to the Great Migration.

**Core idea: There are multiple and complex causes and effects of events from the past.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.8.a: Make evidence-based inferences to explain why the Great Migration led to heightened racial tensions, restrictive laws, a rise in repressive organizations, and an increase in violence.
- 6.1.12.History CC.8.b: Relate government policies to the prosperity of the country during the 1920s and determine the impact of these policies on business and the consumer.

**Core ideas: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.8.c: Identify the conditions that gave rise to the Harlem Renaissance and assess the impact of artists, writers, and musicians on American culture.

**Core idea: To better understand the historical perspective, one must consider historical context.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.11.c: Explain why women; African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other minority groups often expressed a strong sense of nationalism despite the discrimination they experienced in the military and workforce.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.**

**Performance expectations:**

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.c: Determine the impetus for the Civil Rights Movement and generate an evidence-based argument that evaluates the federal actions taken to ensure civil rights for African Americans.

#### **Era 9. The Great Depression and World War II: The Great Depression**

**Core idea: Complex interacting factors influence people's perspectives.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.9.a: Analyze the impact of the Great Depression on the American family and ethnic and racial minorities.

#### **Era 10. The Great Depression and World War II: New Deal**

**Core idea: Historical, contemporary, and emerging processes, rules, laws, and policies are modified as societies change in an effort to promote the common good and strive to protect human rights.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsPR.10.a: Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define and expand individual rights and use evidence to document the long-term impact of these decisions on the protection of civil and human rights.

**Core idea: Evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations can be used to develop a reasoned argument about the past.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCA.10.a: Explain how Franklin Roosevelt and other key individuals, including minorities and women, shaped the core ideologies and policies of the New Deal (i.e., Mary McLeod Bethune, Frances Perkins, and Eleanor Roosevelt).

#### **Era 11. The Great Depression and World War II: World War II**

**Core idea: To better understand the historical perspective, one must consider historical context.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.11.c: Explain why women, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other minority groups often expressed a strong sense of nationalism despite the discrimination they experienced in the military and workforce.

#### **Era 13. Postwar United States: Civil Rights and Social Change**

**Core idea: Civic and political institutions address social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsPI.13.a: Craft an argument as to the effectiveness of the New Jersey Constitution of 1947, New Jersey Supreme Court decisions (i.e., *Hedgepeth and Williams v. Trenton Board of Education*), and New Jersey's laws in eliminating segregation and discrimination.

**Core idea: Social and political systems throughout time have promoted and denied civic virtues and democratic principles.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a: Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade*).

**Core idea: Demographic shifts and migration patterns both influence and are impacted by social, economic, and political systems.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.GeoPP.13.a: Make evidence-based inferences to determine the factors that led to migration from American cities to suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s and describe how this movement impacted cities.
- 6.1.12.GeoPP.13.b: Use quantitative data and other sources to describe the extent to which changes in national policy impacted immigration to New Jersey and the United States after 1965.

**Core idea: Since most choices involve a little more of one thing and a little less of something else, economic decision making includes weighing the additional benefit of the action against the additional cost.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.EconEM.13.a: Explain how individuals and organizations used economic measures as weapons in the struggle for civil and human rights (e.g., the Montgomery Bus Boycott, sit downs).

**Core idea: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.a: Compare and contrast the leadership and ideology of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X during the Civil Rights Movement, and evaluate their legacies.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.c: Determine the impetus for the Civil Rights Movement and generate an evidence-based argument that evaluates the federal actions taken to ensure civil rights for African Americans.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.d: Analyze the successes and failures of women's rights organizations, the American Indian Movement, and La Raza in their pursuit of civil rights and equal opportunities.

#### **Era 14. Contemporary United States: Domestic Policies**

**Core idea: Constitutions establish a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that can change over time.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.d: Use primary sources representing multiple perspectives and data to determine the effectiveness of the federal government in addressing health care, income equality, and immigration.

**Core idea: Evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations can be used to develop a reasoned argument about the past.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.a: Analyze campaign speeches and debates and other sources to determine the extent to which presidential candidates' rhetoric was inclusive, expansive, stereotypical or biased.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.b: Create an evidence-based argument that assesses the effectiveness of actions taken to address the causes of continuing racial tensions and violence.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.c: Determine the influence of multicultural beliefs, products (i.e., art, food, music, and literature), and practices in shaping contemporary American culture.

**Core idea: Historical sources and evidence provide an understanding of different points of view about historical events.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistorySE.14.a: Explore the various ways women, racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, and individuals with disabilities have contributed to the American economy, politics and society.
- 6.1.12.HistorySE.14.b: Use a variety of sources from diverse perspective to analyze the social, economic and political contributions of marginalized and underrepresented groups and/or individuals.

#### **Era 15. Contemporary United States: International Policies**

**Core idea: Historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.15.b: Analyze the impact of United States support for the policies and actions of the United Nations (i.e., Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Sustainability Goals) and other international organizations.

#### **Era 16. Contemporary United States: Interconnected Global Society**

**Core idea: To better understand the historical perspective, one must consider historical context.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a: Analyze the impact of American culture on other world cultures and determine the impact of social media on the dissemination of American culture.

## **6.2 World History/Global Studies**

### **Grade Band 6-8**

#### **Era 1. The Beginnings of Human Society**

**Core idea: Relationships between humans and environments impact spatial patterns of settlement and movement.**

- 6.2.8.GeoPP.1.b: Use maps to examine the impact of the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers that moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia and the Americas.

#### **Era 4. Expanding Exchanges and Encounters (500 CE-1450 CE)**

**Core idea: The diffusion of ideas and cultural practices are impacted by the movement of people and advancements in transportation, communication, and technology.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.8.GeoHP.4.a: Explain why the Arabian Peninsula's physical features and location made it the epicenter of Afro-Eurasian trade and fostered the spread of Islam into Africa, Europe, and Asia.
- 6.2.8.GeoHP.4.b: Assess how maritime and overland trade routes impacted urbanization, transportation, communication, and the development of international trade centers (i.e., the African caravan and Silk Road).

- 6.2.8.GeoHP.4.c: Use maps to show how the interaction between the Islamic world and medieval Europe increased trade, enhanced technology innovation and impacted science, thought and the arts.

**Core idea: The physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.8.GeoHE.4.c: Explain how the geographies and climates of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas influenced their economic development and interaction or isolation with other societies.

**Core idea: The environmental characteristics of places and production of goods influences the spatial patterns of world trade.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.8.GeoGI.4.a: Determine how Africa's physical geography and natural resources presented challenges and opportunities for trade, development, and the spread of religion.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments are shaped by social, political, cultural, technological, and economic factors.**

- 6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.c: Assess the demographic, economic, and religious impact of the plague on Europe.
- 6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.d: Analyze the causes and outcomes of the Crusades from different perspectives, including the perspectives of European political and religious leaders, the crusaders, Jews, Muslims, and traders.
- 6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.e: Determine the extent to which the Byzantine Empire influenced the Islamic world and western Europe.
- 6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.f: Analyze the role of religion and economics in shaping each empire's social hierarchy and evaluate the impact these hierarchical structures had on the lives of various groups of people.
- 6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.g: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.

## **Grade Band 9-12**

### **Era 1. The Emergence of the First Global Age: Global Interactions and Colonialism**

**Core idea: Geographic data can be used to analyze variations in the spatial patterns.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.GeoSV.1.a: Use geographic representations to assess changes in political boundaries and the impact of European political and military control in Africa, Asia, and the Americas by the mid-18th century.

**Core idea: Economic globalization affects economic growth, labor markets, human rights guarantees, the environment, resource allocation, income distribution, and culture.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.GeoGE.1.b: Trace the movement of essential commodities (e.g., sugar, cotton) from Asia to Europe to America, and determine the impact trade on the New World's economy and society.
- 6.2.12.GeoGE.1.c: Assess the role of mercantilism in stimulating European expansion through trade, conquest, and colonization.
- 6.2.12.GeoGE.1.d: Determine the effects of increased global trade and the importation of gold and silver from the New World on inflation in Europe, Southwest Asia, and Africa.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.a: Determine the extent to which various technologies, (e.g., printing, marine compass, cannonry, Arabic numerals) derived from Europe's interactions with Islam and Asia provided the necessary tools for European exploration and conquest.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.b: Analyze various motivations for the Atlantic slave trade and the impact on Europeans, Africans, and Americans.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.c: Explain how the new social stratification created by voluntary and coerced interactions among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans in Spanish colonies laid the foundation for conflict.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.d: Compare slavery practices and other forms of coerced labor or social bondage common in East Africa, West Africa, Southwest Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

**Core idea: There are multiple and complex causes and effects of historical events.**

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.e: Compare and contrast the motivations for and methods by which various empires (e.g., Ming, Qing, Spanish, Mughal, Ottoman) expanded, and assess why some were more effective than others in maintaining control of their empires.

**Core idea: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.f: Assess the political, social, and economic impact of the interactions between indigenous peoples and colonizers over different time periods (e.g., Columbian Exchange, forced labor, slave trade and slavery practices, spread of disease, lingering effects on cultures).
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.g: Assess the impact of economic, political, and social policies and practices regarding African slaves, indigenous peoples, and Europeans in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies.

## **Era 2. Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment (1350-1700)**

**Core idea: Historical, contemporary, and emerging processes, rules, laws, and policies are modified as societies change in an effort to promote the common good and strive to protect human rights.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.CivicsPR.2.a: Compare the principle ideas of the Enlightenment in Europe (e.g., political, social, gender, education) with similar ideas in Asia and the Muslim/Islamic empires of the Middle East and North Africa.

## **Era 3. Age of Revolutions: Political and Industrial Revolutions, Imperialism, Reform and Global Impact (1750-1914)**

**Core idea: Economic globalization affects economic growth, labor markets, human rights guarantees, the environment, resource allocation, income distribution, and culture.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.EconGI.3.c: Compare the impact of imperialism on economic development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America regarding barriers or opportunities for future development and political independence.

#### **Era 4. Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement: The Era of the Great Wars**

**Core idea: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.4.d: Assess the extent to which world war, depression, nationalist ideology, communism, and liberal democratic ideals contributed to the emergence of movements for national self-rule or sovereignty in Africa and Asia.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.4.e: Explain the role of colonized and indigenous peoples in the war efforts of the Allies and the Central/Axis Powers in both World Wars.

#### **Era 5. The 20th Century Since 1945: Challenges for the Modern World**

**Core idea: Governments around the world support universal human rights to varying degrees.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.CivicsHR.5.a: Assess the progress of human and civil rights protections around the world since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Core idea: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.a: Explain how World War II led to aspirations for self-determination and compare and contrast the methods used by African and Asian countries to achieve independence.

**Core idea: Historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical context.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.c: Relate the lingering effects of colonialism to the efforts of Latin American, African, and Asian nations to build stable economies and national identities.

**Core idea: Understanding the interrelated patterns of change by examining multiple events allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of individuals and groups.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.f: Assess the impact of Gandhi's methods of civil disobedience and passive resistance in India and determine how his methods were later used by people from other countries.

## **Era 6. Contemporary Issues**

**Core idea: Governments around the world support universal human rights to varying degrees.**

Performance expectations:

- 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a: Evaluate the effectiveness of responses by governments and international organizations to tensions resulting from ethnic, territorial, religious, and/or nationalist differences.

## Appendix 3

### **NJEA statement on George Floyd, racism, and the need for anti-racist action**

*Published at [njea.org](http://njea.org) on June 1, 2020*

Like so many Americans, we have experienced waves of emotion this week following the brutal murder of yet another African-American man, George Floyd. It is impossible to see the video of him being strangled under the knee of a police officer in broad daylight on a public street and not be disgusted, horrified, angry, sad, and determined to work even harder to oppose and overcome racial injustice in our society.

And the greatest scandal is not just how brutal and horrific that murder was, but how commonplace and unsurprising racist violence like that is in America. This nation was founded on a white supremacist ideology that used genocide and slavery to oppress indigenous people and loot their land. It was built by kidnapping and enslaving African people to work that stolen land under the most inhumane and cruel conditions imaginable. And it is not in the past. That history traces through five centuries of atrocities to today. George Floyd's murder is despicable, but it is tragically unexceptional. That cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged.

As educators, we bear a great responsibility for shaping society. We have the unique privilege of working with children and young people as they are forming their values and worldview. We also have the great responsibility of responding with compassion, courage and conviction as they witness history in real time, as they have been this past week. And more importantly yet, we have a duty and responsibility to work for a better, fairer and more just world for our students to inherit from us.

NJEA has long taken that duty very seriously and we have consciously made it a core part of our mission to advocate for members, students and public schools. In recent years, we have pushed hard for the full implementation of the Amistad Curriculum in our schools so that the horror of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is never forgotten, glossed over or disregarded. We have worked to create a new program called the Amistad Journey to help educators experience some of the important historical sites related to slavery and gain a deeper appreciation for the ways that evil institution shaped and still shapes our society. And we have committed to providing anti-racist training to NJEA staff and leaders to help infuse anti-racism as a fundamental value throughout all the work our union does.

But we know that much, much more is needed. This week, NJEA will be announcing creation of a member-centered initiative explicitly devoted to doing anti-racist work in our classrooms, our communities and our union. All members wishing to engage in that work will be welcomed and encouraged to join. It is not enough to express our disgust and point to our past efforts. We must take assertive action to identify, acknowledge and break down oppressive racist systems that harm our members, stifle our students and corrode our communities.

We must let our decisive, unapologetic action speak more loudly than any statement can.

## Final Thoughts

The New Jersey Amistad Commission takes its name in honor of a group of enslaved Africans, led by Joseph Cinque who while being transported in 1839 on a vessel named the Amistad, gained their freedom by overthrowing the crew and eventually having their case successfully argued before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Cinque and his comrades won their freedom over 180 years ago. And 155 years ago, on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger of the Union army entered Galveston, Texas and read federal orders announcing that all previously enslaved people were free. But in just the first few months of 2020, the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks and others demonstrate that institutionalized racism is as embedded in American culture now as it was in 1839 and 1865.

While the recent protests of their murders, joined by members of all races and ethnicities provide hope, counter-protests such as those in Franklinville, New Jersey, where a state corrections officer and a FedEx employee reenacted the murder of George Floyd as they and their companions shouted racist epithets, demonstrate how far we have to go and how much work remains to be done.

As the statement from NJEA following George Floyd's murder, found in Appendix 3 of this report, states: "...educators bear a great responsibility for shaping society. We have the unique privilege of working with children and young people as they are forming their values and worldview. We also have the great responsibility of responding with compassion, courage and conviction as they witness history in real time."

As we respond with compassion and courage to help students who are traumatized by racism, we must also remember that most of the perpetrators of the murders and most of the counter-protestors were themselves once students in our public schools. Educators, therefore, must be more than not racist, they must be anti-racist.

We have a duty and responsibility to work for a better, fairer and more just world for our students to inherit from us. Fully implementing the Amistad mandate is one of the ways we can do our part to bring about that better world, ensuring that when students graduate from New Jersey's public schools, they know that Black lives matter.

**The Future of the Amistad Initiative:  
Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Curriculum for Educational Excellence**

**Submitted by Lillie Johnson Edwards, Ph.D. to the  
New Jersey State Legislature Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
June 15, 2021**

Co-chairs, Assemblywoman Jasey and Senator Rice, and esteemed Senate and Assembly members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, I am honored to speak to you today about the implementation of the Amistad legislation since its adoption in 2002 and the revised legislation (S-1028/A-3601) which Governor Phil Murphy signed on January 7, 2021.

Today, I will present to you four topics which briefly outline the Amistad initiative's potential to create an inclusive curriculum for our children's educational excellence and achievement:

1. The Amistad legislation's goals and their historical context.
2. Five steps to school districts' successful implementation of an inclusive curriculum.
3. Recommendations for Amistad staff corrective measures and sample strategies for statewide implementation by 2027.
4. Recommendations for support from the state legislature, its committees, and the Department of Education.

The Amistad legislation's goals and their historical context

The 2002 and 2021 Amistad legislation seek to fulfill a goal articulated by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having received his doctorate in history from Harvard University in 1912, Woodson created the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915, published the first scholarly journal in African American history in 1916, established Negro History Week in 1926, included K-12 teachers in the association's meetings and work, and produced teaching materials for school children. Known as "the father of Black history," Woodson wrote, "If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

A generation later, in 1947, Dr. John Hope Franklin wrote *From Slavery to Freedom*, the first scholarly African American history textbook. Reflecting on the importance of his seminal work, Franklin later said, "My challenge was to weave into the fabric of American history enough of the presence of blacks so that the story of the United States could be told adequately and fairly."

The New Jersey Amistad legislation seeks to ensure that our children are taught that Black people not only have a history, but that it is woven into the fabric of every aspect of our nation's founding and evolution. The legislation asks school boards, administrators, and teachers to teach our children a thorough, comprehensive, and inclusive history of the complex human actions and decisions that formed, fractured, compromised, and threatened a more perfect Union.

Five Steps to District and School Successful Implementation

Although several New Jersey school districts, for example, Roselle, Hoboken, West Orange, and Elizabeth, have either fully implemented an inclusive curriculum or have started the process,

many districts simply do not know what steps to take because no instruction manual exists. To fill this gap, I developed the following road map in 2019 and I am happy to report that school districts have responded, "We can do this."

1. The school board creates and adopts a resolution to implement an inclusive curriculum.
2. Each school assesses and revises its curriculum to infuse African Americans into all units on the United States, ideally with the assistance of a master teacher/consultant.
3. Concurrently, teachers and administrators receive professional development training in inclusive historical content from history scholars and teaching methods from master teachers.
4. Subject area supervisors/principals review lesson plans for *consistent* inclusion of African Americans, with master teachers and history scholars consulting, as needed, to identify areas of the curriculum that require revision.
5. Schools meet or exceed NJQSAC Amistad criteria enumerated in the 2021 Amistad legislation (S-1028/A-3601).

Amistad Commission and staff corrective measures and sample strategies for statewide implementation, 2022-2027

The Amistad staff must collect data, create strategic goals with timetables, and develop processes of implementation. None of these currently exist. Amistad work journeys along no directed pathway, marks no milestones, and has no specific goals or timetables. Amistad work has become more programmatic than strategic. I recommend the following corrective measures and sample strategies for statewide implementation of the Amistad legislation by 2027.

1. The Amistad Summer Institute for teacher professional development was created using the National Endowment for the Humanities teacher institute model. As the centerpiece of Amistad's professional development work for teachers, the summer institute was designed as an intensive 1-week period:
  - a. For teachers to learn new content and interpretations of U.S. history from academic scholars.
  - b. For teachers to study inclusive curricula and teaching methods with K-12 master teachers as facilitators and consultants.
  - c. For teachers to work with each other to create inclusive lesson plans that would become part of an on-line database available to every teacher in the state.
  - d. To equip hundreds of teachers to serve as facilitators and consultants in their respective schools and/or districts.

Having failed to follow its original purpose, processes, and production to achieve clearly defined goals, the Amistad summer institute plays little role in curriculum development or in reaching all our school districts. It is fully capable of doing so if strategic, measurable processes were applied.

**I recommend that the Amistad professional staff use history scholars and master teachers to construct summer institutes for hundreds of teachers per year to learn how to infuse Black people into U.S. history, to create lesson plans, to have a**

**broader impact on their respective school and district during the next academic year, and to identify master teachers/consultants.**

2. The Amistad website (found at <http://www.njamistadcurriculum.net/>) was designed to make teaching resources readily available to every teacher in New Jersey. Yet, the website is embarrassingly inadequate in the quantity and quality of curricular content. The inadequacies and inaccuracies in content are too numerous to list. There are very few lesson plans, often only one or two for an entire unit of U.S. history. The literature section of the website has very few Black writers, for example, no Black literature is under "historical fiction" and "short stories." There are no links to New Jersey's Social Studies or English Language Arts Standards.

**I recommend that the entire website be shut down immediately and reimagined in terms of meeting the needs of schools and teachers. At minimum, the website should have a portal for districts to access curricula from model districts and hundreds of lesson plans sorted by grade level and linked to the relevant state standards.**

3. The Amistad staff has not taken advantage of one of its most obvious and powerful resources: the *hundreds* of organizations and institutions that already work with teachers as part of their mission: museums, historical societies, libraries, colleges and universities, and civic organizations.

**I recommend that the Amistad professional staff establish and coordinate a statewide strategy that partners with hundreds of stakeholders, some of whom are currently doing the work of inclusive curriculum development and teacher training without support from or coordination with Amistad.**

4. Currently, there is no database that identifies which of the 686 operating districts have a fully inclusive curriculum, which ones are working on curriculum revision, and which ones need assistance to launch revisions and professional development.

**I recommend that Amistad professional staff create and maintain a database that tracks and assesses deliverables and that the state annually recognize, celebrate, and promote the work of model Amistad school districts.**

5. Amistad has applied for no major grants in the past ten to fifteen years.

**I recommend that the Amistad professional staff use the success of a statewide strategy to apply for major funding from foundations and government agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Ford or Rockefeller Foundations, to cover multi-year curriculum projects and workshops for teachers. This would significantly augment, not replace, the legislated budget for this work and substantially quicken the pace of implementation statewide.**

Support of the state legislature and its committees and support of the Department of Education

The Amistad initiative's future rests on your support and that your colleagues in the legislature and executive branch of state government as well as local governments and school boards.

**I recommend that New Jersey's teacher certification programs train teachers in the content knowledge necessary for developing inclusive lesson plans. We diminish our own success by relying solely on remediation without training new teachers to meet the goals you have legislated. It is also unfair to ask teachers to excel without clearly defined expectations, support, and training.**

**I recommend that the New Jersey state legislature fund the Amistad Commission and staff to carry out the legislated mandate with a budget linked to deliverables and measured outcomes. I further recommend that the state legislature's Amistad funding be earmarked for work within districts and schools and in work with strategic partners.**

**I recommend that full-time, professional staff hired by the Amistad Commission demonstrate how they can strategically move the needle from planning to implementation in ways that serve our teachers and our children.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information.

**Lillie Johnson Edwards, Ph.D.** is Professor Emerita of History and African American studies at Drew University in Madison, NJ where she served for twenty-three years as the founding Director of Pan-African Studies and Director of American Studies. She received awards for university faculty service, and for excellent and distinguished teaching in the College of Liberal Arts and the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies. Prior to working at Drew, she taught at DePaul University, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Earlham College.

As a public intellectual committed to bringing African American studies to adult audiences and K-12 classrooms, Dr. Edwards lectures and consults with libraries and archives, historical societies and museums, faith-based communities, and school districts. In 2020-2021 she was a guest lecturer for the National Jewish Museum (Washington, DC), Apple, the League of Women Voters, the Montclair Adult School, and other organizations. Using compelling images as historical evidence, Dr. Edwards gives audiences a broad and deep understanding of African American and U.S. history. Known for a lecture style that inspires stimulating, candid conversation about challenging topics, she combines intellectual and scholarly knowledge with a profound personal commitment to social justice. Her lectures illuminate the contemporary human condition and elevate our common humanity.

Dr. Edwards has served as a consultant, review panelist, and seminar leader for programs sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ford Foundation, and the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. She served from 2002-2020 as a gubernatorial appointee and charter member of the New Jersey Amistad Commission, co-chair of its Curriculum Committee, chair of the Executive Committee, and co-author of the New Jersey Amistad Bill signed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2021.

Dr. Edwards currently serves on the Oberlin College Board of Trustees as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee and as a member of the Executive Committee, and she chaired Oberlin's 2016-2017 Presidential Search Committee. She is a founding board member of The Mark Cares, Inc., established in 2020 to serve the social and educational needs of children and families in Essex County, NJ. Dr. Edwards is a member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Montclair, NJ, where she serves as chair of the church council having served previously as coordinator of all worship ministries. She was recently appointed as a lay member of the Board of Ordained Ministries of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Dr. Edwards is a life member of the Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH) and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) which presented her with the Mary McLeod Bethune Award.

Dr. Edwards is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Oberlin College where she received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2002. She received her doctorate in U.S. Southern history, African history, and African literature from the University of Chicago where she studied under the preeminent historian, the late Dr. John Hope Franklin. She has published several articles on African American women and African American religion in encyclopedia and anthologies. Her biography for pre-teens, *Denmark Vesey*, won the New York Public Library "Book for the Teen Age." She is also the co-author of an anthology of readings for high school students and teachers to use as they read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

Dr. Edwards is a native of Columbus, Georgia. She and her husband, Paul B. Edwards, have two adult children, and currently reside in Pensacola Beach, Florida and Montclair, New Jersey.

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06/15/2021

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**NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF BLACK EDUCATORS TESTIMONY BEFORE NEW  
JERSEY LEGISLAURE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

JUNE 17, 2021

Good morning Co-Chairpersons The Honorable Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, The Honorable Senator Ronald Rice, and all members of the Joint Committee on Public Schools.

I am James E. Harris, President, New Jersey Association of Black Educators. NJABE is a statewide non-profit education advocacy organization that is committed to working to advance education equity and excellence at all levels of education in New Jersey.

On behalf of NJABE Members I thank you for holding this public hearing regarding the New Jersey Amistad LAW.

I am a charter member of the New Jersey Amistad Commission from its inception to the present. My statement today is made on behalf of NJABE, therefore, I am presenting the views of NJABE and not New Jersey Amistad Commission because those views will be presented by the Chairman, Vice Charwoman, and the Executive Director of New Jersey Amistad Commission as well as The Honorable William Payne. Mr. Payne is a member of Amistad Commission and more importantly, the Primary sponsor of the original New Jersey Amistad legislation.

**SENATE NO. 1028 AND A 3601:SYNOPSIS ALLOCATES AMISTAD COMMISSION  
IN BUT NOT NOT OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, REQUIRES COMMISSION  
TO ELECT CHAIRPERSON AND APPOINT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REQUIRES  
PUBLIIC SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE INSTRUCTION ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS TO AMERICAN SOCIETY**

**CHALLENGES IN EXECUTION OF AMISTAD COMMISSION LAW**

1. There has been constant and on going discussions about meaning of "in but not of the New Jersey Department of Education" provision of the Law. The Executive Director , Amistad Commission has reported to the Amistad Commissioners and not directly to the Secretary of State or Commissioner of Education. This situation often led to conflict and confusion about directions, priorities and accountability.

2. Change of placement in the state government. From 2002 to 2017 the Amistad Commission Office and personnel was located in the Office of the Secretary of State. When the first New Jersey Lieutenant Governor was elected she was also appointed as

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Secretary of State. The new Secretary of State was adamant that she was not interested in housing Amistad Commission Office located in her department as a separate office. After a meeting with Commissioner James E. Harris and Mr. Thomas Puryear, the Secretary of State agreed to transfer the Amistad Office and staff to the Department of Education. By means of a Memorandum of Understanding the Governor formalize the transfer and the Secretary of State ceased to serve as Chair and did not send representatives of the Secretary of State to meetings and activities of the Amistad Commission.

3. There has been six governors and at least eight New Jersey Commissioners of Education since New Jersey Amistad Law was passed. Different Governors and different Education Commissioners have exhibited different knowledge, interest and support for full implementation of Amistad mandates. This constant change has made it difficult for the Amistad Commission to effectively educate the public and to enforce Law. There are still many people in New Jersey who are not aware of the New Jersey Amistad Commission LAW.

### **RECOMMENED CHANGES**

1. Amistad Commission Office needs more staff in order to better serve all school districts in New Jersey.. NJABE supports the budget request that was submitted in the amount of \$2,800,000. the latest Amistad Law for the first requires a specific budget allocation for the Amistad Office which will be controlled exclusively by New Jersey Amistad Commission. This is a very important change that will allow more predictable funding for all aspects of Amistad implementation. Including salary adjustments for personnel assigned to the Amistad Office .NJABE sincerely hope that the legislature will provide adequate funding in view of the great positive status state finances at this time..

2. Appointments to the Amistad Commission need to be made in a timely manner so all members of Commission can function as required. The Commission's work has been hampered by uncertainty about who are current members of the Commission. Appointments by the appointing authorities, the Governor, President of Senate and Speaker of Assembly has resulted in extended period where appointed positions were left unfilled.. Failure of some Commissioner to attend caused several meetings were convened when the Commission was not able to obtain a quorum. There is a need to have a mechanism to remove individuals who do not attend meetings as required.

3. The Executive Branch of State Government must fulfill its obligation and responsibility to ensure that Amistad Law is fully Implement as required by LAW. Therefore, the Governor and by extension, the Commissioner of Education and other cabinet departments should help support the Amistad Commission to carry out its mandates.

4.The State Board of Education and the Department of Education must assume its legal responsibility to enforce the Amistad Commission Law. There are specific provisions in Amistad legislation that require various state departments to support programs and activities of Amistad Law. ..**Public Law 2002, Chapter 75,, c 52:16A-89 Assistance to Amistad Commission** reads

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" A.THE COMMISSION IS AUTHORIZED TO CALL UPON ANY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE, DIVISION OR AGENCY OF THE STATE, OR ANY COUNTY, MUNICIPALITY OR SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE STATE , TO SUPPLY SUCH DATA, PROGRAM REPORTS AND OTHER INFORMATION, PERSONNEL AND ASSISTANCE AS IT DEEMS NECESSARY TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS ACT.

B. THESE DEPARTMENTS OFFICES, DIVISIONS AND AGENCIES SHALL, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE AND NOT INCONSISTENT WITH ANY OTHER LAW OF THIS STATE, COOPERATE WITH THE COMMISSION AND SHALL FURNISH IT WITH SUCH INFORMATION, PERSONNEL AND ASSISTANCE AS MAY BE NECESSARY OR HELPFUL TO ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACT"

5. There needs to be more employed educators on the commission in order to include current educators who are directly impacted by decisions made by the Amistad Commission.

6. Colleges and Universities should be required to certify that every person who is certified to teach in New Jersey are properly informed and prepared to infuse African American history and contributions in the instruction.

7. New Jersey Education Association(NJEA) and American Federation of Teachers(AFT) should take greater interest and proactive measures to insure that their members are provided with professional development training to prepare to teachers to know how to infuse Amistad mandates into instruction that is taught to all students

8. Legislators should become active proponents for full implementation of Amistad Commission Law in every legislative district in New Jersey.

New Jersey Association of Black Educators believes that full implementation of the Amistad Commission is important because we believe that a "THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT racially INTEGRATED EDUCATION MUST INCLUDE INFUSION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PEOPLE OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY TO HISTORY OF AMERICA MUST BE EMBEDDED INTO THE CURRICULUM OF ALL NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS.

NJABE respectfully request that all leaders contact New Jersey policy makers including Governor Phil Murphy, New Jersey Commissioner of Education Angelica Allen-McMilan, municipal, county and state legislators, and New Jersey Amistad Commissioner as well local boards of education and inquire about their future intentions to advocate for compliance of the New Jersey Amistad Commission LAW.

Thank you for this opportunity to share NJABE's concerns with you today. NJABE is willing and able to support your efforts on this very important subject

Sincerely,

5/x

James E. Harris  
President  
NJABE  
973-518-2990

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