



2nd Annual African American History Essay Contest

Dear Buffalo Public Schools Educators,

One mission of the Buffalo Schools Department of Social Studies is to ensure that our students learn about the historical significance of various individuals in our community. To that end we are again asking teachers in the BPS to encourage their students to participate in a writing project that will highlight the accomplishments of local African Americans.

BPS students from grades 4-12 are asked to write a two-page (500 words minimal) essay on an important figure that can be current or historic in nature, related to African American History in New York State or Western New York/Buffalo. This will give our students the opportunity to become familiar with historical figures and events plus, improve and enhance their writing skills. The essays will be judged on actual historic facts, originality and importance to the community.

The essays will be judged by local historians and prizes will be awarded to the top three entries in each division (Junior Division Grades 4-8 & Senior Division Grades 9-12):

Each student who participates will receive a ***Certificate of Participation*** for submitting an essay for this important Community Service Project. Winning submissions will be archived with the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library and displayed on the BPS and NFCSS websites. This project is co-sponsored by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Buffalo History Museum, Explore Buffalo, New York State Archives and the Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies.

The deadline for the essay submission is March 29, 2019 and notification of winners will be sent to respective schools on April 12th. Essays can be emailed as a PDF to:

NFCSSPresident@Gmail.com

For more information, you can contact Rich Pyszczek by phone at 716-816-1511 or by email at:

Rpyszczek@BuffaloSchools.org

Our Proud Co-Sponsors



Selected African American Historical Figures in NYS and WNY

- Fredrick Douglas; Abolitionists, Social Reformer, Statesman (Rochester, NY)
- David Dinkens; Former Mayor of New York City (New York, NY)
- Shirley Chisholm; Congresswoman & Presidential Candidate (NYC & Buffalo, NY)
- H. Carl McCall; SUNY Board of Trustees, Politician (Albany, NY)
- Mary Talbert; Suffragist, Social Reformer, Activist (Buffalo, NY)
- Harriet Tubman; Underground Railroad Conductor (Buffalo, NY)
- Frank Messiah; Local Chapter NAACP President (Buffalo, NY)
- William Wells Brown; Activist, Social Reformer (Buffalo, NY)
- William Douglas; Owner of “Dugs Dive” in the Canal District (Buffalo, NY)
- Joseph Hodge; Saloon Keeper in early Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)
- Dr. J. Edward Nash; Pastor and founder of local NAACP and Urban League (Buffalo, NY)
- John Brent; Buffalo first African American Architect (Buffalo, NY)
- Robert Traynam Coles; Contemporary African American Architect (Buffalo, NY)
- Frank E. Merriweather; Publisher, Political Organizer (Buffalo, NY)
- George K. Arthur; Buffalo Common Council President (Buffalo, NY)
- Arthur O. Eve; NYS Assemblyman for City of Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)
- Eva Doyle; Educator and Advocate for City of Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)

Students are also encouraged to select an individual not listed above.

Selected Historical Resources for Student Research

Buffalo Architecture and History of Buffalo (Explore Buffalo)

<http://www.buffaloah.com>

History of African Americans in Buffalo, NY (Explore Buffalo)

<http://www.buffaloah.com/h/af/index.html>

The Freedom Wall/Ferry Street Corridor Project

<http://buffaloah.com/a/free/free.html>

Buffalo History Museum Research Library

<http://www.buffalohistory.org/Learn/Research-Library.aspx>

Buffalo and Erie County Library Grosvenor Room

<http://buffalolib.org/content/grosvenor/local-history>

NYS Archives Digital Collections

<http://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov>

WNY Heritage Magazine

<https://www.wnyheritage.org/archive/index.html>

Monroe Fordham Regional History Center at Buffalo State College

<http://www.monroefordham.org>