FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PRESS RELEASE
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Florida Department of Education and Volunteer Florida Encourage Students to Participate in 2025 Black History Month Contests

Student essay contest winners will receive a 2-Year Florida College Plan scholarship provided by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., January 15, 2025 – Today, the Florida Department of Education and Volunteer Florida encourage students to participate in the Black History Month student art and essay contests with the theme **"*Honoring African American Contributions to Florida's Success*."** Black History Month is recognized and celebrated in the United States each year in the month of February.

"Florida is committed to teaching students about African American history and the role African Americans have played in Florida's success," **said Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr.** "I encourage all students to participate in the Black History Month art and essay contests and immerse themselves in Florida's history."

"Florida goes the extra mile to recognize the immense and historical contributions of African Americans in our great state, **said Volunteer Florida CEO Josie Tamayo**. "We are proud to offer this opportunity each year to recognize outstanding students and educators in Florida for their unique efforts and talents."

All Florida students are invited to participate in academic and creative contests based on this year's theme. Students in grades K-3 are invited to participate in an art contest, while students in grades 4-12 are invited to participate in an essay contest. Additionally, students, parents, teachers and principals are invited to nominate full-time educators of all student grades for the Black History Month Excellence in Education Award.

About the Student Art Contest

The Black History Month art contest is open to all kindergarten through third-grade students in Florida. Each student will submit original, two-dimensional artwork based on this year's theme. Four statewide winners will be selected, and each winner will receive a $100 gift card for school supplies and a 1-year pass to Florida State Parks.

About the Student Essay Contest

The Black History Month essay contest is open to all students attending any Florida school in grades 4-12. Six winners will be selected: two elementary school students (grades 4-5), two middle school students (grades 6-8), and two high school students (grades 9-12). Each winner will receive a 2-year Florida College Plan scholarship provided by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation and a $100 gift card for school supplies.

Contestants must be Florida residents, attend school in Florida in grades 4-12 (including public, charter, private, home or virtual) and able to provide a Social Security Number. Each student may enter only one essay, written in English, no longer than 500 words.

There are many examples throughout our state's history of African Americans and their contributions to Florida's success. Using your own words, write about an African American who has had an impactful effect whose story should be shared. The subject of the essay should be a Floridian.

Some examples are:

- Lottery Secretary John Davis
- Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune
- Ray Charles
- Representative Kiyan Michael

About the Excellence in Education Award
Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis' Black History Month Excellence in Education Award Contest is open to all full-time educators in an elementary, middle, or high school in Florida. Four winners will be selected, and nominations may be submitted by a principal, teacher, parent/guardian, or student. Excellence in Education award winners will receive $2,500 from Volunteer Florida.

Contest Entries and Nominating Forms and Guidelines
Student contest forms and educator nomination forms must be mailed to Volunteer Florida or submitted online at www.floridablackhistory.com.

Volunteer Florida
Black History Month Committee
1545 Raymond Diehl Road, Suite 250
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. (ET) on Monday, February 3, 2025.

For more information about the contests, please visit www.floridablackhistory.com.

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For more information about the Florida Department of Education, visit www.fldoe.org.