



Langdon Elementary School

20th and Franklin Streets, N.E. • Washington, D. C. 20018

September 20, 1990

Mr. Allan Kullen  
National Program Director, Americans All  
6011 Blair Road, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20011

Dear Mr. Kullen:

With the release of its proposal, *African-Centered Education Initiative* (Fall 1989), the District of Columbia Public Schools with approximately 81,000 students, formally joined "...many other school systems in preparing students for instructional experiences incorporating the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural perspectives of the larger American society and the world." (p.1)

While various components of the existing curriculum address certain aspects of pluralism, the launching of this initiative represents a more comprehensive, focused and coordinated effort at marshalling resources toward infusing multi-cultural awareness throughout the curriculum. With over a 90 percent African American enrollment, it is fitting that the school system's first step would consist of an African-centered focus.

The Initiative began with a "Year of Awareness" in 1989-90 during which time administrators, supervisors, teachers, and parents were given an orientation to and training in the African-centered curriculum. With the opening of school in fall 1990, the school system has entered the "Year of Commitment" which will be characterized by accelerated curriculum development and implementation in the classroom.

After having an opportunity to review *Americans All*, I am pleased to write in support of this national multi-cultural education program. I believe that *Americans All* will be a significant addition to our initiative for the following reasons:

- the program provides teachers and classrooms with newly researched and developed materials, activities and strategies not readily available elsewhere on a variety of peoples and cultures;
- the research and care evident in the preparation of these materials is an important feature designed to ensure the truth and accuracy of the information conveyed;
- the authoring of the various selections by members of the ethnic groups portrayed, or by those who have worked extensively with the group portrayed, is a unique feature of this curriculum and helps ensure awareness, pride and sensitivity to the cultural continuity of those who came to make up the peopling of America;
- the materials, activities and strategies convey knowledge of the unique contributions of each group, fosters improved self-concept through the elimination of stereotypes and reinforces community and national values of our pluralistic American society;
- the curriculum provides a means of increased parental and volunteer involvement within the schools; and
- the widespread availability of *Americans All* could significantly advance the timetable of school systems all across America as more and more states and districts adopt or develop multi-cultural initiatives.

The District of Columbia Public Schools looks forward to being among the first to implement *Americans All* following the identification and selection of pilot schools and the scheduling of principal orientation and teacher training this school year.

Sincerely,



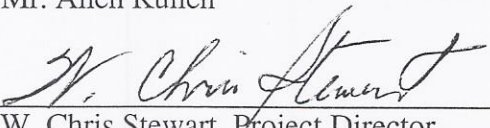
Roger J. Fish, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Allen Kullen

FROM:   
W. Chris Stewart, Project Director  
English and History Curriculum Framework Project

DATE: May 1, 1995

SUBJECT: *THE AMERICANS ALL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM*

I am pleased to inform you that many of the District of Columbia Americans All teachers are still actively using the Americans All Program in their classes. This became very evident to me while visiting schools and observing history teachers in their classrooms this school year.

As I reflect on the program, many Americans All activities come to mind. I remember the initial training sessions and the excitement that permeated the training areas. I can still see the teachers as they worked in groups and learned to use the materials to plan lessons they would later use in their classes or present to other teachers in training sessions. I can see Lillie Matthews organizing materials to be mailed out or delivered to one of the program participants. I can see you and Gail Christopher addressing the attendees in many of the training sessions and at our local D. C. Council for the Social Studies Conference. I can see Frances Powell, the former supervising director for social studies, presenting the program to a multicultural planning committee at the Multicultural/Values Education Branch. These memories are rich for me because the program is rich, rich in historical information and resources on the peopling of America.

These memories are vivid for other reasons as well. They serve as a bold reminder of the many obstacles we faced in our attempt to formally adopt Americans All to support multicultural education in the District of Columbia Public Schools. Unfortunately, the time simply was not in our favor. Total school restructuring prevented our efforts to permanently place this invaluable program in our curriculum. To have adopted Americans All would have ensured all of our students a comprehensive and interesting educational program that reveals the personal stories behind the many journeys made to the American shores.

I am very thankful that in spite of this major obstacle and the lack of systemic support, we do have many students benefiting from Americans All. When

teachers receive good materials and appropriate training, they forge ahead. Such has been the experience here in Washington, D. C. Thank you for providing the foundation that enabled our teachers to feel confident in using the Americans All materials.

As you expand the program to include other school districts, I would encourage you to consider the following suggestions to maximize the use of the materials and to ensure that the program can continue in a systemic way that embraces all students in a school district.

- Have each school district identify an Americans All coordinator.
- Have each participating school send a team of three or more teachers to be trained. This would allow for in-school support and reduce the likelihood that a single teacher is the only person in a local school trained to use the materials.
- Institute a training session geared to train school district teachers to train other teachers in their school district. Provide support for this effort until it can survive independent of you.
- Include principals, parents, and central office staff in the training sessions -- let everyone know up front that there is no hidden agenda. Include all subject areas -- provide ideas for interdisciplinary instruction.
- Encourage regular meetings (monthly or bi-monthly). These meetings should be conducted to support the teachers in using the materials. They should also promote collaborative sharing -- each participate should grow based on the shared experiences of the group members. Support this effort until it can be sustained independent of you.
- Create (or connect) a national network. Consider publishing a newsletter, conducting a regional or national conference(s) or annual teleconference, coordinating a video showcase, conducting students fairs or research competitions, coordinate field trips to ports of entry for contemporary immigrants, etc.
- Bring contact persons from each school district together in a brainstorming session to look at the next steps for existing Americans All Programs.

I hope that these suggestions will be helpful to you. If I can assist you in framing an effort to move one of these or other ideas forward, please let me know.

I truly feel that Americans All is an excellent historical program -- it supports American History content and helps students learn about their own heritage and learn about and respect the heritage of their classmates. Please continue to expand the program to include other school districts. Through Americans All instruction and experiences, we can learn to appreciate and respect the heritage of all Americans -- we can learn to appreciate and respect the diversity that makes America America.