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February 11 - February 17, 2023 57th Year Volume 42 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Educators and Students Push Back

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# Educators and Students Push Back Against Changes to AP Course in African American Studies



Dr. Aeneid Williams teaches at Hosanna Christian Academy in Baton Rouge.



Nyla Williams is a History major at Xavier University.

**Zora Thomas**  
Data News Weekly Contributor

The College Board announced on Feb. 1st new revisions to the Advanced Placement course for high school students in African American studies. Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Educa-

tion's rejection of the course on Jan. 19th. Educators and students push back against changes to AP course in African American Studies resulted in the College Board's decision to remove aspects of the curriculum. The Board stripped references to Black feminists, LGBTQ scholars, and the Black Lives Matter movement facing criticism from conser-

vative opponents of critical race studies. "He's [DeSantis] sectioning out our history," said Dr. Sharlene Sinegal-DeCuir, the Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of History at Xavier University of Louisiana. "Which means to me, he is trying to let us know in some uncertain terms, that our history is irrelevant. And if our history is irrel-

evant, our place in America is irrelevant. That's how I see it," Sinegal-DeCuir added. Sinegal-DeCuir was selected to help create the coursework for the AP African American Studies course. The College Board specifically sought out and invited about 100 educators and scholars such as Xavier's Sinegal-DeCuir, who

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Katherine Jones is a Xavier student who took AP classes as a high school student.



Dr. Sharlene Sinegal DeCuir is the chair of the Department of History at Xavier University of Louisiana. She was part of a team of college educators that contributed to creating the AP course in African American Studies

U.S. History and AP Government. But that definitely had a one-sided view to it," said Katherine Jones, a Xavier student who is a United Negro College Fund Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow and a History student. "And going into a predominantly White school for like AP African American Studies class, would kind of been a safe haven, in my high school for me to flourish with Black thoughts and Black theories and seeing multiple sites and multiple intersectionality's of Black individuals," she added.

Baton Rouge Magnet High School is one of the 60 schools in the country testing the revised AP course on African Americans studies. Students told New Orleans-based WWL-TV that they were hoping to learn more from the course on Black history and its impact on the United States. Teachers in the state continue to advocate for the course to remain a full exploration of the Black experience.

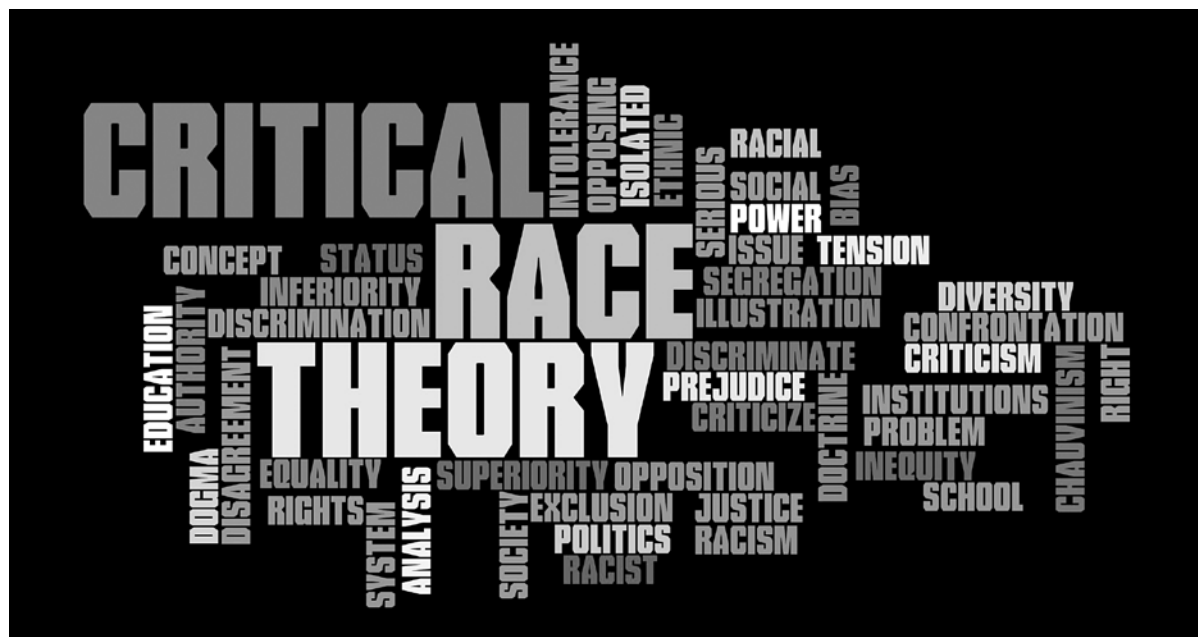
"As an HBCU grad, this only bolsters my belief that Black students need to have an educational experience in an environment that recognizes the challenges that we face," said Dr. Aeneid Williams, a fifth-grade mathematics teacher at Hosanna Christian Academy, a predominately Black school, K-8 in Baton Rouge, LA. and a former Xavier student class of 1990. "We are not afforded the opportunity to learn our history in general history classes. Now the AP class that supposedly would have afforded our young students the chance to delve more into the myriad pictures of Black history has been stripped down to being just another version of the White man's history," she added.

and question how sincere early efforts were to encourage a full teaching of the Black experience.

"Are teachers supposed to ignore students who may form a question about the aforementioned 'unacceptable' Black history, since it may lead to a discussion 'pushing a liberal agenda?' said Nyla Williams, a Xavier student. "As a history major at an HBCU, I am highly disappointed by College Board's revisions, though I am not surprised," she said.

Students also indicated they wished they had such a course while in high school.

"I did take, what was it, the AP



are well versed in African American and Africana Studies to develop the high school curriculum.

The College Board offers classes such as AP United States History, AP World History: Modern and AP European History. Students are not required to take AP courses; however, many do test out the course via the placement test to qualify for college credit. The African American studies course is currently in a testing phase at 60 schools across the country, according to the board, and is yet to be added to the history and social studies section of the College Board website. DeCuir said she was disappointed with the news and emailed a College Board executive director asking if they would consider pulling all AP courses from Florida.

"If they're not going to teach AP African American Studies in the state of Florida, they shouldn't

have access to any of the other AP courses," Sinegal-DeCuir stated. "So, College Board, they wrote me back and they said, 'We're taking this into consideration.' A few days later, I see the news that they have completely taken out a lot of aspects of the introduction level AP studies coursework that we created collectively, as a group of 100 Black scholars, or more," she added.

Sinegal-DeCuir further explained that critical race theory is not being discussed correctly due to a general lack of understanding of the topic. This misunderstanding leads to the frustrations of educators like herself dealing with governmental restrictions like DeSantis, who exert political pressure to censor and remove information.

"I think the politicians are getting it wrong, because they're not understanding what critical race [theory] is and what it means. It is

not divisive," said Sinegal-DeCuir. "What it is, is saying that prejudice and bias, all of those things lead into the legal system, right. And it affects the legal system and politics that we now currently have the United States. It's not a bad thing. It's just stating the facts."

During 2020, the United States as well as the world was at a standstill in the midst of the protests surrounding the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmed Arbery. The country was faced with political unrest and much of the country was in a state of learning about Black history and actively working towards anti-racism. But since then, there has been a backlash, particularly from conservatives criticizing the rise in anti-racism efforts as not suited for K-12 education.

Students have spoken out against efforts to resist anti-racist teachings

# Get Ready!

February 18, 2023

93rd State Representative  
Special Primary Election

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4th through February 11th  
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5th) from 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.



# A Fresh, Fly & Fabulous Fashion Movement 50 Years of Hip-Hop Fashion



**Tracee Dundas**  
Fashion Stylist

The Grammy Awards is a music awards ceremony that recognized the best recordings, compositions, and artists. The three-hour event is an incredible evening filled with A-list guest, show-stopping performances and an array of amazing fashions. This year's Grammy Awards paid tribute hip-hop; to a genre of music that many thought was a passing fad and would never be accepted by the powers that control the mainstream music industry. Same can be said for hip-hop fashions, both a cultural movement, 50 years in the making.

To understand hip-hop fashions, let's first look at the origin of hip-hop music. Hip-hop is a culture and art movement that was created by African Americans, Latino Americans, and Caribbean Americans. It was born fifty years ago in the 1970s and 80s on the streets of New York, emerging in the Bronx with block parties where locals gathered to express themselves in the music, dance and fashion. It can be characterized by four key elements: rapping, turntablism, break-dancing, and graffiti. Other elements include historical knowledge of the movement, beatboxing, hip-hop language, and hip-hop fashion. Some of these are argued to be the "fifth element".

The movement took on a life of its own and it was no surprise so did its fashion. As the music evolved and became global, so did its fashion style. During the 1980, hip-hop icons wore brightly colored name-brand tracksuits, leather bomber jackets, Chuck Taylor All-Stars sneakers, chains, and kangri. This became the fashion code of the industry with many high-end fashion houses such as Louis Vuitton, Fendi and Gucci recognizing the opportunity to capitalize on the fashion movement and adapted a new category for their brand that would appeal to this new music movement. Two movement that now dominate mainstream in both music and fashion.

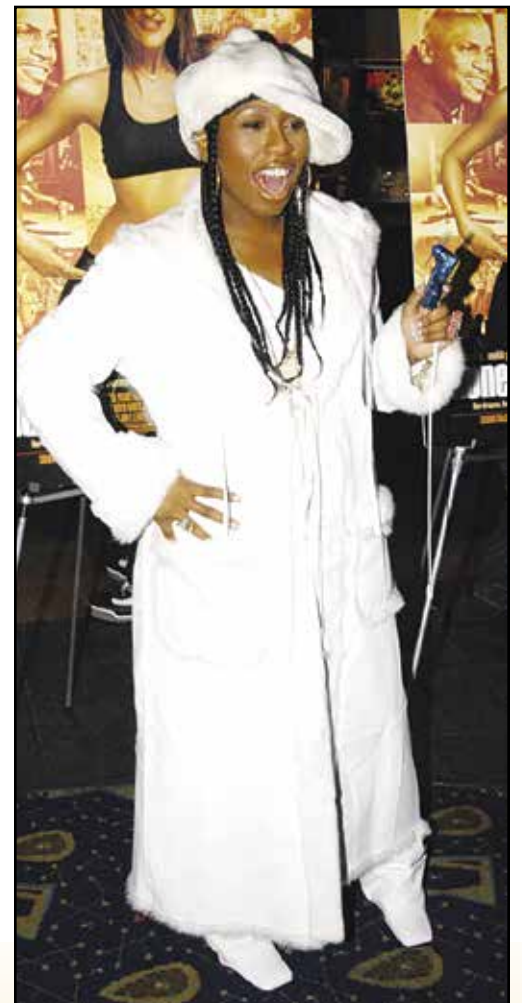
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3Migos



GucciMane

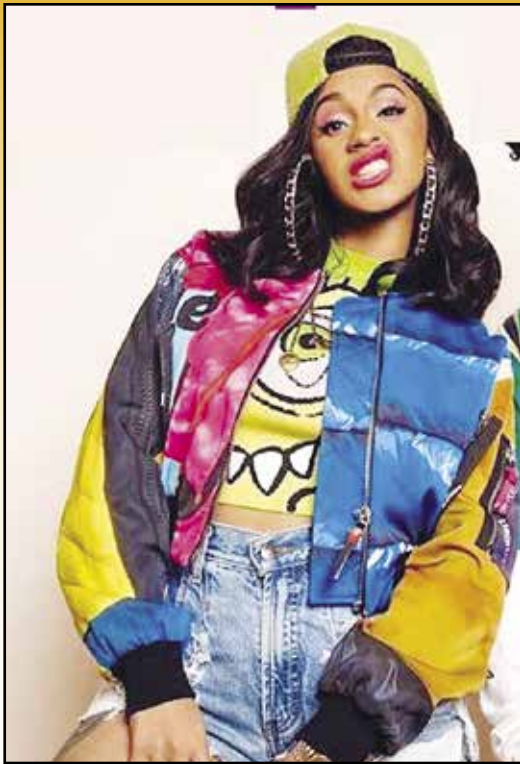


MissyElliott

Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events.



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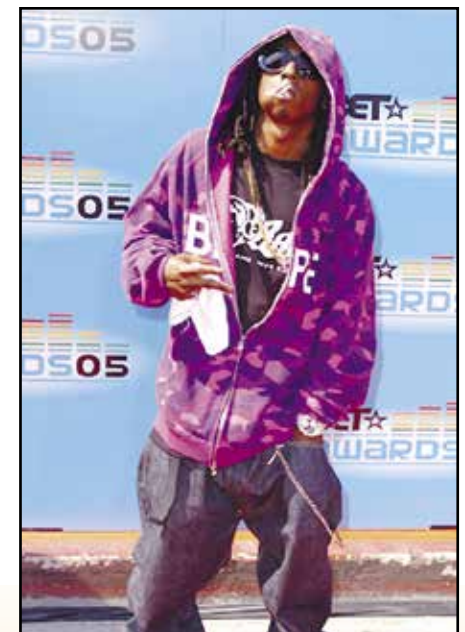
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# Local Artists Share How the Arts are Central to Social Movements in the Community

Story and Photo  
by Zamariah Strozier  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Local performing artists and activists spoke about the important role of the arts in impacting the community at Tulane University's Lupin Theater on Friday, Feb. 2, 2023, hosted by the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South (NOCGS).

"There is no empty space and always stories that come before ours begin," said Lauren E. Turner-Hines, the Artistic Director of No Dream Deferred NOLA, a Community Theatre Program.

"I want to acknowledge my ancestors of the Wolof and Bambara people of Senegambia, whose blood is in the soil and have culturally shaped this place," Turner-Hines



(Pictured Left to Right) Kai Knight, the Artistic Director of Silhouette Dance Ensemble and Breath!' and Choreographer, Performer and Instructor for Kumbala African Drum and Dance Collective, Bamboula 2000 Band; Jarrell Hamilton, the Founder of Jarrell Hamilton Inc.; Ausetua Amor Amenkum, the Big Queen, Member of Washitaw Nation Big Indian Tribe, and the Artistic Director and Founding Member of Kumbuka African Drum and Dance Collective, Lauren E. Turner-Hines, the Artistic Director of No Dream Deferred NOLA; Mariama Curry, the Founder and Artistic Director of Culu and N'Kafu Traditional African Dance Companies; and Greer Goff Mendy, the Director of Tekrema Center for Art and Culture and Author of "Black Dance in Louisiana, Guardian of Culture."

said in reference to her ancestors. The event titled "Women and Movement: African American Women Affecting the Arts in New Orleans" is part of an ongoing series of Black History month events at Tulane. The women spoke about using art to address social and political conditions. As part of the event, the women shared their personal stories and how it informs the projects they are leading in the community.

"I'm a child of Africa. I'm a child of the drum," said Ausetua Amor

Amenkum, known as Big Queen, member of Washitaw Nation Big Indian Tribe, and the Artistic Director and Founding Member of Kumbuka African Drum and Dance Collective.

"Which is why I take African dance into the prisons," she said. "You know why I take African dance to the elders because I feel that dance in America, African dance, is taken out of context of how it was used in Africa. It was a part of the community," Amenkum added.

The artists said that they are working to restore a sense of community much like those in the Black empowerment movements did before them.

"Being a part of the Black Panther Party, they always taught us

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# NNPA Wraps Midwinter Conference Showing Strength of Black Press, and Star-Studded Celebration for Dr. Benjamin Chavis

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
National Correspondent

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the trade association for more than 230 African American-owned newspapers and media companies, held its 2023 midwinter training conference in Puerto Rico.

By the end of the four-day event, publishers, partners, sponsors, members, guests, and anyone else who visited the San Juan Marriott Beach Resort and Stellaris Casino gained a better appreciation of the power of the Black Press of America.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of the NNPA, received the organization's highest accolade while colleagues, family, and friends celebrated his birthday.

With "Digital Innovation Training and Engagement" as the conference's theme, NNPA Executive Administrator Claudette Perry and conference planners did not disappoint.

The NNPA began by introducing everyone to its new app, which facilitated registration, provided information and instructions to each session.

Publishers left the Island of Enchantment with a better understanding of the importance of their digital products and how to monetize both print and online publications.

Kate Cox, adjunct professor at the Poynter Institute in Tampa, Florida, conducted an enlightening conversation on overcoming



Benjamin Chavis, NNPA President receives the NNPA Lifetime Achievement Award flanked by Karen Carter Richards, NNPA Chairman, and Mark Thompson, Master of Ceremonies at the NNPA Midwinter Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

obstacles to produce sustainable corporate outcomes through digital transformation.

Cox advised publishers on how to engage in a presentation that was developed expressly for NNPA members to generate revenue streams because of digital transformation.

In a separate workshop, Cox assisted publishers in implementing the suggested evaluations of their current audiences, staffing, and consultants to maximize potential for raising digital revenue and expanding their total market influence.

Later, NNPA Digital Manager Norman Rich and Rolling Out COO Randy Fling discussed the digital revenue success approaches adopted by certain members, including Rolling Out.

"Digital ads are an important part of digital, but there are many

other benefits," Fling advised publishers. "It can help your business," he said.

"Do not unsell yourself," Rich pleaded to publishers.

Ashley Edwards, vNews Lab's US Partnerships Manager, and Tina Xiao, Google News Initiative's global program manager, presented publishers with three best practices for driving traffic to their websites.

They also instructed journalists on how to use Google tools to find, verify, and tell stories tailored to their audiences.

In addition, the pair discussed the importance of GNP resources for publishers to grow and sustain their digital businesses.

Chavis spoke with Rep. FredERICA Wilson (D-FL) about the importance of Black lives and the Black press in a pre-recorded conversation.

He also had a live fireside chat

with Dorothy Tucker, President of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), about strengthening the bond between the two organizations.

The Illinois proprietors of The Times Weekly, Jayme and Dwight Casimere, conducted a session entitled "The Business of Wine and How it Became a Digital Advertising Opportunity."

A workshop on the opinions and recommendations of Generation Z and Millennials regarding the future economic sustainability of the Black Press was a highlight of the conference.

Discussion was led by Chelsea Lenora White of the Houston Forward Times, Jarren Small, founder of Reading with a Rapper, Michale Green, managing editor of the Washington Informer, and Lafayette Barnes, publisher of The Bridge.

The quartet discussed and illustrated how publishers may generate new revenue streams as a result of the intersection and engagement of adolescents with their digital and print media.

"Our NNPA executive committee and convention planning committee, chaired by Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones, are grateful that [everyone involved] has taken the time to join us in support of the Original Black Press," said NNPA Chair Karen Carter Richards.

"We are grateful to all of the NNPA's corporate partners, sponsors, and supporters who have generously contributed to allow us to be together here in Puerto Rico," Jones added.

## Newsmaker, Continued from page 6.

that we had to educate ourselves and it was very important that we get educated and pass it down, so I did," said Mariama Curry, the Founder and Artistic Director of Culu and N'Kafu Traditional African Dance Companies. Curry explained that her family history is embedded in the structure of Black culture today. Her father was a civil rights worker with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to lead the

Southern Christian Leadership Conference adding that later on, she was among the youngest at 14, to join the Black Panther Party at the time.

The panelists shared that the arts are a way to confront challenges currently in the Black community and as community leaders and mentors they engage with systemic issues each day.

"Black women in the arts revolve

around racism and gender inequality. That's just the bottom line, it's racism and gender inequality," said Greer Goff Mendy, the Director of Tekrema Center for Art and Culture and Author of "Black Dance in Louisiana, Guardian of Culture."

"Throughout my younger life, we were not given grants and even now because we were not considered the socially accepted or the good Negro or the stories as I told you about my practice. It's not

predicated on the romance that we often associate with dance in New Orleans, so you're not going to get funded because it's not liked," Mendy said.

And while the arts remain a place where financial support for their work is often short term, they said they will continue to push forward to ensure current generations have access to Black artforms.

"As an artist, you have the right to create," Mendy said.

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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: [terrybjones@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrybjones@bellsouth.net) and [datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net).

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### Job Opportunity

#### Administrative Assistant Wanted

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