



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




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GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 7, 2021

TO: Michigan Pre-K-12 Educators

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 
Sheila A. Alles, Chief Deputy Superintendent 
Randy J. Riley, State Librarian 

SUBJECT: Recognizing Outstanding African American Authors

Good news! In celebration of African American History Month, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Library of Michigan are taking nominations from educators of outstanding African American authors to showcase during the month of February. Specifically, we are asking educators to nominate an outstanding African American author, a literary work of any genre from the author, and the way or ways that the educator has used the work with students.

MDE and the Library of Michigan will share the winning nominations (author, work, way(s) in which the educator uses or has used the work with students, educator's name, position, and school/district/institution) during the month of February.

One of the most important ways to improve student literacy is to increase student engagement with literature. Student engagement with literature increases in part as students see themselves in their literature. There is a power to children seeing themselves (mirrors) and others (windows) in their reading. Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop explains the terms mirrors and windows, as well as sliding glass doors, in this short [YouTube](#) video, as she notes the importance of children seeing reflections of themselves in literature as well as seeing a diverse representation of other people.

By raising the consciousness about great African American authors from educators to educators and by lifting up African American authors and their works, we seek to create conditions for greater engagement with literature among Michigan students.

A link to the nomination form is found [here](#). Nominations will be accepted through Friday, January 15, at 6:00 p.m.

Thank you for your consideration of this effort.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors

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