



Great Futures Start Here
CARDINAL MOONEY
HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Mooney Family,

I would like take this opportunity to update you in regard to the questions raised on social media and speculated on in the mainstream media pertaining to the lesson presented in Thursday's African American History class.

We take seriously the concerns brought to us by any member of our Mooney Family. We have been diligently working since Thursday afternoon to collect as much information as possible from all parties involved in order to facilitate a thorough and fair investigation. I have waited to reach out to you until now in an effort to avoid sharing any inaccurate or incomplete information while we gathered first hand accounts from those who were directly involved in the class. This includes the three educators present: a Mooney faculty teacher, a YSU student teacher and an observing supervisor/teacher from YSU for the student teacher who presented the class, as well as a gathering of anonymous statements from all students who participated in Thursday's class. I would like to reiterate that ALL students participated in the class. Please know that our internal inquiry into the concerns raised about this situation will be ongoing.

The lesson presented in Thursday's African American History class covered history dealing with Southern Agriculture leading into the Industrial Revolution. The sad truth in our collective American history of this time period is that it included the unforgivable existence of slavery in America. This is understandably a very sensitive matter and has more impact on our students whose lives are personally touched by this history.

This is a class that has been presented in past years here at Mooney and is widely represented in schools across the country as a significant part of the state-approved United States History curriculum. It is structured as an immersive and kinesthetic experience. In an immersive experience, students enhance their understanding, albeit only at a slight glimpse, of the plight slaves had to endure during this dark time in America's history. The lesson itself comes with a comprehensive set of supplemental materials. Activities in this particular lesson included listening to spiritual music from the period, as well as watching a video of a first-hand account of the experiences slaves had to endure while picking cotton. Students were then provided the opportunity to actually feel, manipulate, and work the seeds out of genuine raw cotton samples. Study and discussion then ensued regarding the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin and the mechanization which took over the industry. At the conclusion of class, students were then given the option to keep the samples if they wished or leave them behind. ALL students present in the class were participants in the lesson. Please be aware that this activity will no longer be a part of any curriculum at Mooney and steps are being taken to properly vet current and future lesson plans with an eye toward cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness.

We will continue to address the concerns raised regarding this particular lesson, and we encourage all members of the Mooney Family: students, parents and alumni to speak first with the school when concerns arise, as many issues can be clearly addressed with transparency and open communication. We intend to communicate and fully cooperate with any additional inquiries into this specific concern, including working closely with the CMHS Minority Alumni Council and with the NAACP. We will continue to strive to enhance our awareness of self and selflessness through further study, service and a focus on sensitivity to the needs of all. The Mooney Family is a strong reminder that no matter what we experience in life, we have each other to rely upon, both now, and long after our students walk these hallowed halls. I ask that you continue to pray for Cardinal Mooney High School, as I promise that we will continue to pray for you. May God Bless the Mooney Family.

Sincerely,

Mark M. Vollmer
Principal