

OPINION ON LAUSD –

The headline reads **“LAUSD agrees to revise how English learners, blacks are taught.”** The article written by Howard Blume of the L.A. Times, reports on the “sweeping revision” that will take place in the district as a result of this agreement. Secretary Arne Duncan went to L.A. to emphasize that this could be a model for finding ways to deal with the horrendous educational outcomes of Hispanic and Black youngsters in the L.A. district. The Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights, Russlynn Ali, further stated that “What happens in L.A. really does set trends across the nation. More and more school districts are dealing with this challenge.”

I suppose that all of this is true. But as an African American of *long* years, educated in a 4 room, segregated backwoods school in Kentucky, there is something profoundly dysfunctional about this “civil rights,” gain. To tell me that Black students are so deficient in the English language, their mother-tongue, tells me that there is massive and disturbing failures on the part of parents and families in the care, nurture and training of their own children.

We did not speak perfect English in those days of the 50’s, but we went to school for one reason, to learn how to respect learning and teachers and speak the English language. This prepared us and we soaked up everything we could. I doubt if Kentucky spent more than one-tenth of what is spent today per pupil, for our education.

We can’t go back, but what are we going forward with? There are programs that can help with this situation.. Literacy programs are certainly a must and we should move aggressively to ensure all American students read, comprehend, write and speak the English language.

I do not believe that money is the only answer. We know the answer and we are afraid of it. Civic education is the answer. These young learners must know that they belong to America and America belongs to them. We are citizens not interlopers. We need money however, for innovation, trilingual education and civic education – to learn our national language at a level that is not remedial, as if it were not our mother tongue. It will be well for us to tell our children

to abandon the ghetto lingo...hip hop lingo, in favor of the national language. It would propel them forward. Speak any dialect you wish, but communicate in the educational and public arenas in the national language.

It is for the good of our youngsters. Stop making excuses and experimenting on real people for political gain.

#It's just common sense.