



**FREEDOM
SCHOLARS**
LEARNING CENTER

NEWS LET TER

**February
2026**

February Community Highlights

School Counselor's Week Spotlight: Brittany

February was School Counselor's Week, and we want to pause to celebrate Brittany for the care, consistency, and leadership she brings to our scholars. Her presence helps make FSLC a place where students feel supported, seen, and encouraged to keep growing.



Family Breakfast: "Breakfam"

In February, we hosted Breakfam, our Family Appreciation Breakfast, and it was a beautiful time of connection. Families gathered to share a meal, build community, and celebrate the partnership we're strengthening every day between home and FSLC. Moments like Breakfam remind us that when families feel valued and supported, scholars thrive.

Protecting Head Start Funding

We also received confirmation of a letter FSLC signed related to opposing proposed cuts to Head Start funding. We remain committed to protecting early childhood supports that families rely on and that children deserve. [Link to the Letter.](#)

Protecting Black Immigrants from ICE

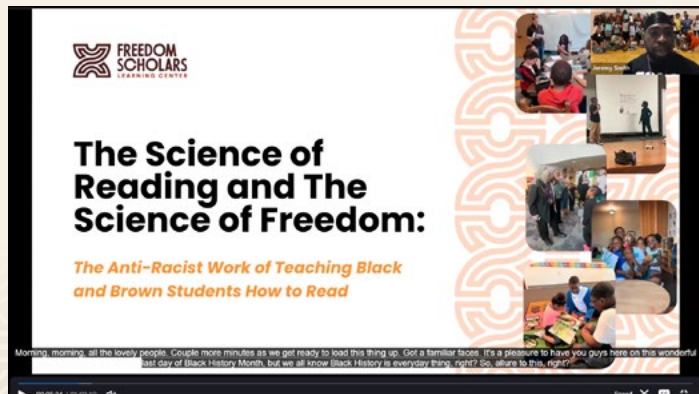
FSLC signed on to a national letter and petition focused on protecting Black undocumented immigrants and opposing harmful ICE practices. This reflects our ongoing commitment to racial justice, immigrant justice, and safe communities for children and families. [Link to the Letter](#)

Anti-Racist Curriculum Presentation

In February, Jeremy and Brandon presented at the Our Local History 5th Annual Free Virtual Antiracist Education Conference on February 28.

Their breakout session, "The Science of Reading and the Science of Freedom: The Anti-Racist Work of Teaching Black and Brown Students How to Read," shared how FSLC approaches literacy as both skill-building and justice work.

They walked participants through our philosophy, methodology, and framework, and highlighted key findings from our Word RICH intervention program, including what we're learning about supporting Black and Brown scholars with instruction that is rigorous, affirming, and built for real outcomes.



Family-to-Family Workshops Launch

February marked the launch of our first Family-to-Family Workshop, and the engagement came through in real ways with strong views, comments, and interaction. This series is designed to elevate parent wisdom and community knowledge, and we are excited to keep it going.

Watch all the Family-to-Family Workshops on YouTube



iReadify Book Challenge

Throughout February, scholars participated in the iReadify reading and writing challenge as a literacy push for the month. We're grateful for every scholar who showed up for the challenge and kept building their reading habits.



Family Dinner: Black History Month Celebration (Black Excellence Through Food)

We also want to make sure we highlight a powerful February moment: our Black History Month Family Dinner.

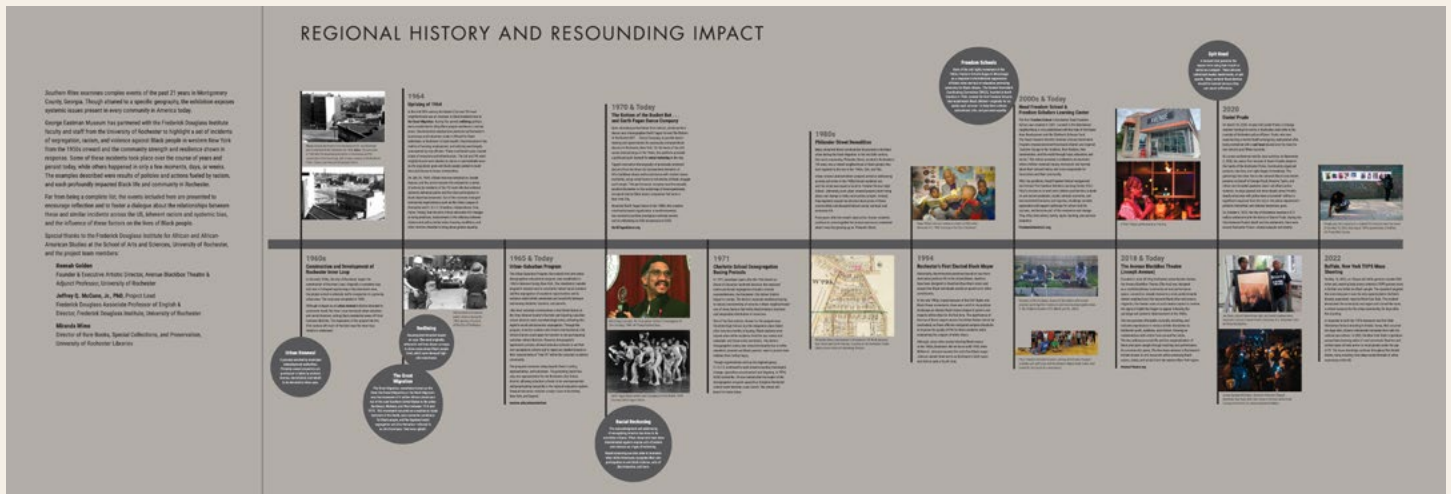
A huge shoutout to Courtney Floyd and Zy'meria Daniels for their incredible display of Black excellence through food. They cooked a cultural meal that's a staple in the Black community, and they made it all from scratch. Parents were impressed, and the love in the food was obvious.

Featured menu:

- ♦ Rasta Pasta
- ♦ Baked Mac and Cheese
- ♦ Candied Yams
- ♦ Pasta Salad
- ♦ Baked Chicken
- ♦ Yellow Rice
- ♦ Honey Baked Beans (with hamburger meat)

It was more than a meal. It was culture, community, and care served on a plate.





Spotlight: George Eastman Museum Feature

FSLC was honored to be featured in a timeline connected to the George Eastman Museum here in Rochester as part of the Southern Rites exhibit, which highlights photographer Gillian Laub's examination of complex events spanning the past 21 years in Montgomery County, Georgia.

This exhibit was completed by Reenah Golden (Blackbox Theatre), Jefferey Q. McCune, Jr. (Frederick Douglass Associate Professor, University of Rochester), and Miranda Mims (Director of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, University of Rochester Libraries).

We're proud to be included in a piece that lifts up the beacon of regional history and resounding impact, and we're grateful to see our work recognized in a space dedicated to learning, truth-telling, and community reflection.

Staffing and Capacity Growth

We will share updates as soon as we learn more about the Rochester Youth Year and AmeriCorps placement process.

Rummage Sale & Raffles (Coming in April)

Mark your calendar and spread the word. FSLC is hosting our next Rummage Sale & Raffles on:

- ♦ Date: April 18, 2026
- ♦ Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- ♦ Location: St. John's St. Mark's Church, 1245 Culver Road, Rochester, NY

100% of proceeds will support taking our scholars on an educational trip to Washington, DC.

Great items at great prices. Most items range from \$1 to \$10 (furniture priced slightly higher). Clothing, shoes, socks, personal hygiene items, jewelry, purses, bedding, DVDs, candles, holiday decor, household items, stuffed animals, toys, books, and more.

And we're raffeling off a 32" Smart TV!

Donations are gratefully accepted. Bring a friend, stop by, and help us send scholars on a trip that will expand their learning beyond the classroom.

IRC Spotlight

Books We Read in February

This month's Integrated Reading Curriculum selections opened space for scholars to explore Black history, youth-led courage, identity, and the power of family connection.

Because Claudette

Scholars learned about Claudette Colvin and the bold courage it took to stand up for what was right as a young person. This book helped scholars connect activism to everyday bravery and reminded them that leadership does not wait until adulthood.

Themes: youth activism, courage, justice, leadership.

The Doll Test

This story guided scholars through a powerful moment in history that reveals how racism impacts children's self-image. Scholars discussed the importance of affirming Black beauty and worth, and how truth-telling is part of healing.

Themes: self-worth, racial identity, truth, healing.

Dear Dad

This book centered family love, guidance, and the strength that comes from being supported. Scholars reflected on the role of family encouragement and how words, presence, and care can shape confidence and direction.

Themes: family bonds, encouragement, growth, love.

