

# AGENDA ITEM

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## MLK Oratorical Contest: The Purpose and Power of Education

A girl sits in the corner wondering why the loud shots blazing in the background always mean sadness. Her brother, Moshe, has been collected and a guard comes to collect her in just the same way. He hits her with a force he believes will never make her want to utter another word, let alone breathe. Nine years old, she grows quieter but not weaker. Inhaling the abuse and ignorance of confused men, the sun begins to set on her playground. As the chains that bound her to land she could never love grow heavier, so does her heart. After escaping the concentration camps of the Holocaust, Alicia Appleman-Jurman writes "a person could actually become a part of the living dead; could go on living but feeling nothing, not pain nor fear, not sorrow." In realizing that she was determined to do the complete opposite, she wrote a book that created a passageway into the mind of that young girl and a light for others to see that in the end, life is what you make of it and an education will help with whatever you want that to be.

Whatever I want to be....Just about everyone, adults especially, will say that kids think that their invincible and....their right. I like to think that I am. Scientific Fact: my energy cannot be destroyed only changed and manifested into new creations. The bible says that I can do all things through him. So yeah, I am invincible and as I sit and think that I realize that I don't quite yet know what to do with that superpower and yes it is a superpower to be able to face each day, one after the other, thinking that I am capable of conquering what today has for me. Obama said, yes we can. How? I go to school to learn how, to learn why and when I get that diploma the road map of my life will still be fuzzy and when I get lost or need to make detour I have my education to fall back on, a map key to explain all the confusing parts I still won't understand. That comforts me but it doesn't seem to comfort everyone else. Over the years, the word education has lost its value, it's lost its luster, it's lost its truth.

I use to work at this daycare over the summer and I remember a kid saying “my swagger is too much for them to handle. I am not a nerd.” That’s what he said, he proclaimed like it was something to be proud of. One of my favorite authors, John Green, said “for someone to say “I notice you’re a nerd” is like someone saying “I notice that you'd rather be intelligent than be stupid, that you'd rather be thoughtful than be vapid, that you believe that there are things that matter more than the arrest record of Lindsay Lohan.” To be educated is not synonymous with the phrase “I am better than everyone else” but that I am a sponge who can still take on living water.

Think of young Martin Luther King Jr. sitting, looking outside his window wondering why he can no longer play ball with certain friends or why he can’t drink from certain labeled fountains, why God given mouths speak words that are the complete opposite of Godly. Malcolm X said “tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today”. Dr. King knew that there needed to be a change, that if he wanted to see one he had to go and do it himself, he had to prepare. He received his doctor of philosophy from Boston College on June 5, 1955. At that point he was able to look at every single one of his secret admirers and tell them he had a love letter for the world. They listened not only because his subject agreed with his predicate but that the adjectives he was using to describe the forbidden verbs punctured the noun’s seemingly invisible hearts. The change came, but there’s still change to come. The change came, but we still need a change.

Don’t think it was easy for Dr. King, yes he was extraordinary and spectacular and all the other razzle dazzle words your imagination can discover but so are you. Your past may create concrete fences around the world you hold in the present and it may be disguised as anger or laziness. But I know that those walls are there to be the symbol that shows that that there was never a pot of gold at the end of your rainbows because the rainbows never existed. It still pours rain in your storm. School feels like the gushing wind wanting to steal your umbrella but it’s got a disguise too. It’s really the bottom pole, base

tub and tilt mechanism that holds everything together. It makes you strong. Not that you weren't strong and mighty before but every skyscraper needs its foundation or ...it falls. You will fall because this world can make worms meat of all us; we've learned that in the 1/3 of the story our textbooks tell us.

But I've still got faith the size of a mustard seed....with one little mustard seed the photosynthesis of my life will continue and I'll realize that those heroines were just the rough draft and my education forms the red pen that will investigate all their troubled line and....one day I'll stand as the final copy.