

Classical Education Through the Eyes of the Founders

When thinking about this statement, I rely on Dr. Moore's ideas, as he designed the curriculum for the Barney Charter School Initiative. He said, "We should be building young Americans, not young Romans."

If we aspire to follow the Founders, then we must study the classics as they did. We can also study the Founders themselves: the actions they took and texts they wrote in the midst of the challenges of their day. Studying the manner in which they won their freedom and built an exceptional nation out of nothing, against the most powerful nation of their time, can help us today as we encounter modern threats to liberty. We inherited this incredible gift of liberty, and we have a great responsibility to educate our students and prepare them to carry on this responsibility.

As we study the Founders, we can promote a unique American character with a "can-do" attitude. Through studying these character traits and virtues, our students will come to understand the importance of their responsibilities and actions. We as educators can use this knowledge to help solidify how to be good citizens and teach that our actions in liberty, as insignificant as they may seem, do in fact make a real difference!

After teaching at James Irwin for eight years, I have learned the importance of teaching true history to young people. I've taught at other schools that only taught *Social Studies*—an attempt to replace true history with cultural studies and sensitivity efforts designed to erode the values and principles of liberty. These schools didn't encourage teachers to teach something that truly matters and that would make a difference in our world. We must teach our young people about real events and how to identify false information that we encounter daily from the opponents of freedom.

We have seen a difference in the lives of some of our students already from teaching about our Founders and true events in history. Our students are hungry for knowledge, and they are having real conversations with their parents and other adults outside of school. Parents are learning with their children and it is changing families.

Classical education without the Founders might lead to a glass-half-full view of the world, but when immersed in the lives of the Founders, we develop the necessary courage, perseverance and moral authority to face threats to our liberty! Our Founders were exceedingly brave. They promoted ideas that have the power to change the world and doing so added to their own struggles. Our Founders were not only interested in a good education for our citizens, but they were also interested in ensuring a more perfect union, securing blessings of liberty, establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility and providing for the common defense.