

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Since 1976, February is known for celebrating Black History Month. It originally began as “Negro History Week” in 1926 and was created by Carter G. Woodson: a Black historian, scholar, educator and publisher. Some other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, also dedicate a month to celebrating Black history.



Why the need for Black History Month? Why is there not a White History Month?

Throughout our American history, both the historical abuses as well as accomplishments of Black Americans have been either lightly touched on or left out all together from our history books, within our classrooms and within our communities. This month is an effort to address this erasure. In reality, Black History IS American History. As we work towards incorporating Black History (and all other underrepresented ethnic groups) into our year-round curriculum and collective awareness, having a set-apart time of learning and recognition is important. The goal is an inclusive history that tells all of the American story!



As we celebrate Black History Month, it is important that we recognize both the stories of excellence and accomplishment as well as the acknowledgement of the many horrors that Black Americans have endured. It is especially important that we go deeper than Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. While these two individuals are indeed worthy of learning about and from, Black history is so much more expansive, and we do it a disservice to never move beyond these well-known individuals. We also can have these conversations at all age-levels. There is a way to bring all children (and the adults in their lives) along into this conversation.



Some suggestions for celebrating this month:

- 1) We encourage you to involve the Black members of your school community (students, parents, teachers, staff, volunteers) and invite them to share in the planning of how your school community can engage with this month! For next year, start this process right after getting back from winter break, so there is ample time to create a great plan for the month of February!
- 2) Diversify your bookshelf! Whether this is in the classroom, the school library or books assigned to the students, be intentional about offering authors of color, with Black characters and stories. Thankfully there are so many options, for all ages and reading levels, available now!
- 3) Plan an evening event for family engagement! Perhaps one of our local Black historians to speak on Jacksonville Black history. Perhaps a Black cultural night of the arts showcasing Black students and music, art, poetry, dance, or a play.
- 4) Plan a school day event such as a literacy event, character parade or history fair type of learning exchange where students learn and present about Black history.
- 5) Highlight Black accomplishments in all areas of study throughout the month. Perhaps a bulletin board, or a daily announcement from admin.



This is an excellent resource from the Center for Racial Justice in Education, with free ideas for educators to use for Black History Month:

<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/black-history-month-resource-guide-for-educators-and-families/>

DCCPTA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee