

Monthly Message:

February 1st is the first day of Black History Month. Black History Month was created in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Initially called Negro History Week, the celebration expanded to a full month in 1976, in order to focus even greater attention on the contributions of African Americans in the United States and throughout the diaspora. Today, Black History Month continues to amplify and deepen the exploration and elevation of African Americans and their contributions to society through film screenings, museum exhibits, and by encouraging the study of the accomplishments of African Americans year-round.

In addition to recognizing and celebrating Black history, February will begin the Month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the 9th month of the Hijri calendar and is considered one of the holiest months to Muslims. During this month, Muslims around the world commence fasting sun-up to sun-down (abstaining from eating and drinking) for either 29 or 30 days. Observing Muslims, as young as 10 years of age, may fast the entire day, while some, as young as kindergarten, may fast for half of the school day or half of the day.

Important Dates to Remember:**February 1** - National Freedom Day

- National Freedom Day, observed on February 1st, commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which abolished slavery. It is a day to celebrate freedom, equality, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights and social justice.

February 2 - Candlemas

- Candlemas, observed on February 2nd, holds cultural significance as it marks the midpoint between winter and spring and is traditionally associated with the blessing of candles, symbolizing light, hope, and purification. Rooted in both Christian and pagan traditions, Candlemas commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the temple and has become a day for reflection, renewal, and the anticipation of warmer days ahead.

February 2 - Groundhog Day**February 12** - Tu BiShvat

- Tu BiShvat, known as the "New Year of the Trees," holds cultural significance for the Jewish people as a celebration of nature and the environment, symbolizing renewal and growth. Traditionally observed by planting trees and eating fruits associated with Israel, the day highlights the Jewish connection to the land and reinforces values of environmental stewardship and gratitude for nature's abundance.

February 14 - Valentine's Day**February 15** - Parinirvana

- Parinirvana, also known as Nirvana Day, is significant in Buddhist culture as it commemorates the death and final enlightenment of the Buddha, marking his release from the cycle of rebirth. Observed with meditation, teachings, and reflection, the day emphasizes impermanence and serves as a reminder to practice mindfulness, compassion, and the path to spiritual liberation

February 17 - Presidents' Day**February 20** - World Day of Social Justice

- World Day of Social Justice, observed on February 20th, promotes efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, and unemployment. It highlights the need for fair and equitable societies that ensure the rights of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

February 26 - Maha Shivaratri

- Maha Shivaratri, a major Hindu festival, holds profound cultural significance as it honors Lord Shiva, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness and ignorance. Celebrated with night-long vigils, fasting, and chanting, the festival encourages introspection, spiritual growth, and devotion, emphasizing the themes of renewal and transformation.

February 28 - First day of Ramadan

February

Black History Month

Equity in Practice

February - Black History Month

Wednesday, February 12 from 12:00pm - 1:00pm

- Join us for a panel discussion in celebration of Black History month. This discussion will highlight the Black experience and how we can collectively uplift the Black community as a District. - [Register HERE](#)

Wednesday, February 26 from 12:00pm - 1:00pm

- Join us for a panel discussion where School District staff in collaboration with community partners, raise awareness about the month of Ramadan. The discussion will provide insight on how to best support our Muslim students and colleagues during this month. - [Register HERE](#)

Community Organizations:

[African American Museum in Philadelphia:](#)

The African American Museum in Philadelphia brings diverse communities together in greater appreciation of the Black experience through the combined narrative of art, culture and historical witness.

[The Black Journey:](#)

Black Journey Philadelphia is committed to highlighting and preserving the rich history and contributions of Black Philadelphians through immersive walking tours that connect past and present. Its mission is to educate and inspire by sharing untold stories of resilience and achievement, while its vision is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Black culture within the city's historical narrative.

[100 Black Men Philly:](#)

The 100 Black Men of Philadelphia is dedicated to mentoring and empowering African American youth through leadership development, educational support, and community engagement. Their mission is to improve the quality of life within the community and enhance educational and economic opportunities for all African Americans, with a vision to create a generation of confident, well-prepared leaders committed to uplifting their communities.

Black History Month Learning Resources:

[Center for Racial Justice in Education](#)

[National Education Association](#)

[National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

[PBS: Classroom Resources for Black History Month](#)

Ideas for School Based Celebrations

Celebrating Black History Month? Reach out to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at equity@philasd.org to have your celebration highlighted in the Equity Newsletter.

Interactive Lessons & Discussions:

- **Preparation:** Research key historical figures, events, and themes; prepare visual aids and multimedia resources.
- **Activity:** Conduct lessons on significant topics like the Civil Rights Movement or the Harlem Renaissance.
- **Engagement:** Facilitate class discussions, encouraging students to analyze primary sources and connect history to current issues.

Project-Based Learning:

- **Preparation:** Design group project assignments on Black history and culture; gather materials and resources.
- **Activity:** Assign creative projects like digital timelines, presentations, or documentaries on lesser-known figures.
- **Engagement:** Allow students to explore their interests and present their work, highlighting the influence of Black culture in different areas.

Incorporate Technology:

- **Preparation:** Identify virtual field trips, interactive tools, and online resources; schedule technology access.
- **Activity:** Take students on virtual tours of museums or use online platforms for interactive storytelling about Black history.
- **Engagement:** Use technology to make history interactive and encourage students to explore content beyond traditional textbooks.

Student-Led Activities:

- **Preparation:** Plan a student-led assembly or gallery showcasing their learning; provide guidance on topics.
- **Activity:** Host a presentation or performance event where students share skits, poems, or artwork inspired by Black history.
- **Engagement:** Empower students to lead and take ownership of the learning experience, encouraging creativity and expression.

Community Connections:

- **Preparation:** Reach out to local Black leaders, activists, or community members to speak to the class.
- **Activity:** Organize guest speaker sessions or interviews where students engage with community experiences.
- **Engagement:** Involve students in asking questions and reflecting on the lived experiences shared by guest speakers.

Reflective Practice:

- **Preparation:** Set up journaling or reflection prompts related to Black history and current events.
- **Activity:** Have students write reflections or participate in discussions on the importance of diversity and social justice.
- **Engagement:** Encourage deep thinking and personal connections, helping students link historical themes to their own lives and communities.