



Do Schools Need a Book Character Day in October?

By Shawnta S. Barnes – October 24, 2018

I'm not opposed to schools having a book character day when students dress up as characters from a book. I am opposed to this day happening in October. In my experience, book character day in October has been a way for schools to appease parents or angry students by letting them wear a costume to school. When this day happens in October it normally falls on or is close to Halloween. Instead of having an activity to appease parents and students, schools should grow a backbone and tell parents and students that Halloween needs to be celebrated outside of school on their own time.

“But it’s fun Mrs. Barnes.” A student once told me this after I went on my soapbox about it. I replied, “There are other ways we can have fun at school *AND* learn something.” That’s my issue. I don’t see the educational value when this day happens in October. I see lots of girls dressing up as princesses and boys dressing up as superheroes and many kids wear costumes of their favorite character from the latest movie. Yes, students can wear a costume of a character from the latest movie because the industry wants to suck every last drop of milk out of that cow so they make a book available for purchase too.

There isn’t a well thought out plan. This activity isn’t embedded into the curriculum. You don’t have a group of students who read the same book dressing up as characters and presenting information to the class.

When I have seen book character day take place outside of the month of October, I have seen more thought put into the activity. There are learning goals. Learning is the point of school. Yes, students should have fun, but schools really need to stop having activities because they are afraid of push-back from parents and students.