



## Beyond Black History Month

By Educator Barnes – February 19, 2019

I love being black, and I'm glad we have Black History Month. When Black History Month ends, it seems that our history goes off to collect dust until next February. I have observed fabulous lessons, projects, and school programs to support black history during February, but that's not good enough.

As a mother of two black sons, I want my children to see themselves reflected in their school's curriculum throughout the school year. We aren't only black in February, so we shouldn't learn about our history and culture only during February. If I stepped into my children's classroom in September or in April, I want my sons to see themselves in the curriculum.

There are projects teachers schedule to take place in February that could take place during other months of the school year. Curriculum shouldn't come to a halt to force in a black history

project. As my fellow *Indy K12* stated in a recent article, “Black people have been in British-North America since at least 1619 and maybe even before. Meaning that there is no unit in a US History class that can be discussed absent the contributions of black Americans.” If you are waiting until February, you are not teaching American history correctly.

Moreover, social media has been flooded with fancy decorated doors to promote Black History Month. Why did those teachers decorate their doors? Was it because the principal mandated it? Was it to get likes and shares on social media? Most importantly, how are those doors decorated when the calendar moves from February 28 to March 1? Black history also includes bringing black culture, all of who black children are, not only into your curriculum but also on your classroom walls. I’ll be the first to admit that this school year I could have done a better job of this not only for my black students, but also for students from other cultures.

This has to be a conscious effort. It is easy as teachers to fall back on curriculum we like or even activities we enjoyed in school, but we are not teaching ourselves. The more we get into the habit of considering who is in our classroom as we plan our lessons, the less need we will feel to insert special lessons during Black History Month.