



When Will Juneteenth Come for Black Students?

By Educator Barnes – June 19, 2019

Juneteenth, a holiday celebration I didn't learn about until I was an adult, is celebrated annually to commemorate enslaved black people in Texas finally learning about the Emancipation Proclamation on June 19, 1865. The Emancipation Proclamation, which freed enslaved black people, was issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The black people in Galveston, Texas did not receive the news until 2 1/2 years later.

Last year, I asserted students needed to learn about this holiday in school, so they aren't adults and finally becoming aware of this important event. Honestly, I'm not surprised this isn't a standard part of the curriculum. The curriculum in many schools across the United States is not made for black students and neither are the schools.

Too many black students are enslaved – they're shackled – to poor performing schools. If the school does not improve or another option such as a traditional public charter school is not opened, these black children are doomed. They are doomed to drop out of school. They are doomed to carry on generational poverty. They are doomed to turn to a life of crime.

When will someone ride up on a horse like Union Major General Gordon Granger did when he delivered the news in Galveston to announce black children are free from failing schools? I want black children to have a chance and not be on a path of failure because of their zip code.

If you haven't figured out, the cavalry is not coming. We have to save ourselves. We have to break off these shackles. Our country is steeped in white supremacy. You even have individuals like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell suggesting reparations for black people aren't needed because we had President Obama.

If we want black children emancipated from failing schools, we have to roll up our sleeves and get the work done. We don't have time for school choice debate. While we are arguing with people who are not helping us, schools are churning out black children who won't be able to have the life they deserve.