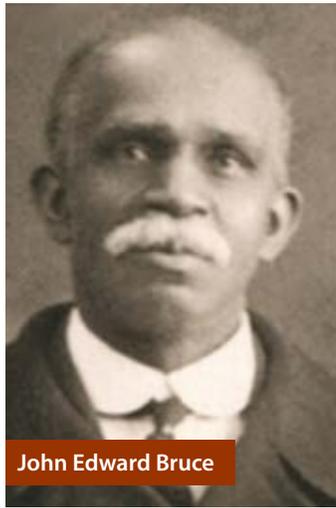


# PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

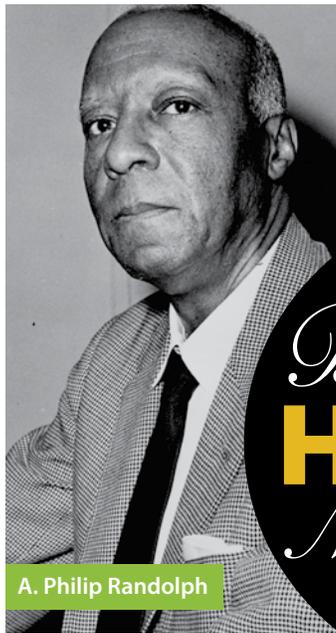
Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



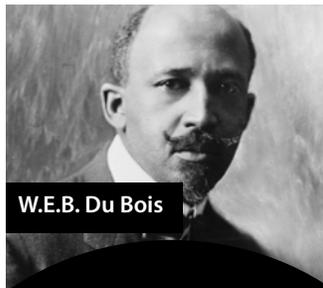
John Edward Bruce



Ida B. Wells



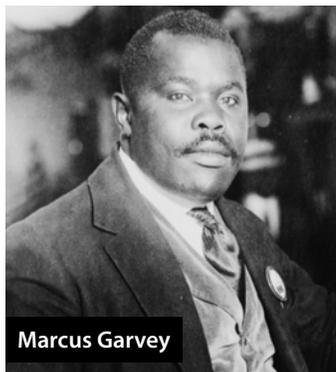
A. Philip Randolph



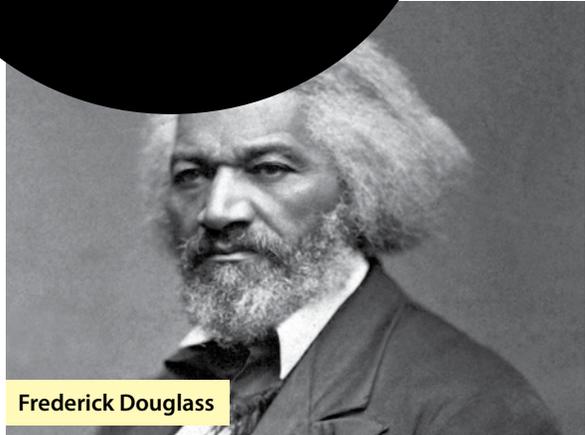
W.E.B. Du Bois



Arturo Schomburg



Marcus Garvey



Frederick Douglass

## Remembering Black History As OUR History

Each February, Americans across the United States commemorate Black History Month, a month-long national celebration of the contributions and achievements that black men and women have made throughout U.S. and world history. The month, which was officially recognized by President Gerald R. Ford in 1976, originally came from Dr. Carter G. Woodson's idea in the 1920s for a "Negro History Week." Dr. Woodson, a black historian and teacher who was the second black person ever to earn a doctorate at Harvard University, chose the period between the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass in February to teach, remember, and celebrate black people's contributions to Western and American civilization and culture. In 1926, Dr. Woodson wrote, "If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in

*Continued on next page*

# Black HISTORY Month



the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated... Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."

While much has changed since Dr. Woodson and his contemporaries like W.E.B. Du Bois, John E. Bruce, Marcus Garvey, Arturo Schomburg, A. Philip Randolph, and Ida B. Wells were championing civil rights in the first quarter of the 20th Century, it is clear that many of the same concerns they

had about American society remain relevant to this very day. Given the societal issues the U.S. continues to face, honoring Black History Month remains as important as it has ever been, as it is a reminder that black people and culture are inseparably woven into the fabric of America. Black History Month is a celebration of identity and activism that serves as a month-long call to action for everyone to recognize and accept the key contributions that black men and women have made in all aspects of American society. Likewise, the month is both a reminder about

the progress the U.S. has made to date as well as an inspiration for the trials that remain ahead for all Americans, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, or ethnic background.

In honor of Black History Month, the Department of Education asks all of New York City's educators, parents, and students to pay tribute to the countless men and women who best exemplify the struggle to realize the basic idea upon which the United States was founded: that all people are born free and equal.

*"What you refer to as Negro [black] history is nothing more than the missing pages of world history."*

— Arturo Schomburg



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# PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

## SIGN UP!

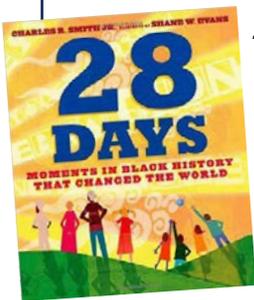
# Learning More About Black History

Whether you are a parent or a student, there are many books, websites, and other media available that anyone of any age can view to learn more about black history and the men and women who fought for freedom and equality for all. In addition, many of New York City's museums, parks, libraries, and communities have organized events to commemorate Black History Month.

As you make plans to celebrate Black History Month with your friends and family members, consider some of the following books, websites, and places of interest. For a more complete listing, please visit the DOE's official Black History Month webpage: <http://schools.nyc.gov/ParentsFamilies/BlackHistoryMonth>

## Books

### Elementary Grades



**28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World** by Charles R. Smith, illustrated by Shane Evans

**All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom** by Angela Johnson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

**The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth, & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore** by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

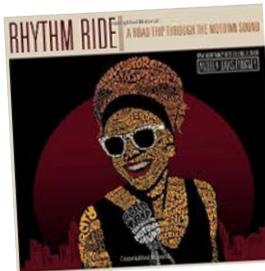
**Child of the Civil Rights Movement** by Paula Young Shelton

**Last Stop on Market Street** by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson

**Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X** by Ilyasah Shabazz, illustrated by AG Ford

**Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement** by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Ekua Holmes

### Middle Grades



**Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice** by Phillip Hoose

**The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander

**How I Discovered Poetry** by Marilyn Nelson

**Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters** by Andrea Davis Pinkney

**Ninth Ward** by Jewell Parker Rhodes

**Rhythm Ride: A Road Trip Through the Motown Sound** by Andrea Davis Pinkney

**Stella by Starlight** by Sharon M. Draper

### High School & Older

**All American Boys**

by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely



**Between the World and Me** by Ta-Nehisi Coates

**Black Boy White School** by Brian F. Walker

**The Fire Next Time** by James Baldwin

**The Freedom Summer Murders** by Don Mitchell

**Go Set a Watchman** by Harper Lee

**The Harlem Hellfighters** by Max Brooks

**The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration** by Isabel Wilkerson

## Websites:

**Library of Congress' African American History Month page:** <http://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov>

This website provides a wide range of resources related to black history, including primary source materials and links to other national institutions that are celebrating Black History Month, including the National Gallery of Art and the U.S. Holocaust Museum.

**Smithsonian Institution's African American Cultural Heritage Tour:** <http://heritagetours.si.edu/bhm.html>

Take a virtual tour of the Smithsonian Institution's vast collection of artifacts, exhibits, and art, including pieces that date back to the early 1700s. This website also includes online quizzes that test users on their knowledge of black history and the objects covered in the Smithsonian's online tour.

**Oxford African American Studies Center's Underground Railroad: The Journey to Freedom:** <http://aasc.oupexplore.com/undergroundrailroad/>

This website contains an interactive timeline that allows users to explore the history of the anti-slavery movement. The site features links that provide further details about the key people, places, publications, and events that defined the abolitionist cause during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

**Google Cultural Institute's Black History and Culture:** <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/black-history-and-culture>

Google worked with dozens of cultural organizations across the U.S. to create a robust digital collection of black history and culture. The site makes it easy for users to share what they have viewed and learned on social networks, and it even enables users to choose their favorite

pieces and curate their own galleries.

**New York Public Library's Digital Schomburg:** <http://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schomburg/digital-schomburg>

NYPL's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture created a website that enables people around the world to access exhibitions, books, articles, photographs, prints, audio, and video concerning African history and culture as well as the African Diaspora.

**New York Times' Unpublished Black History:** <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/national/unpublished-black-history>

Throughout February, the *New York Times* is releasing unpublished photos of various moments in black history from its vast of archives. Submit your email address, and receive updates each time the page is updated with new content.

## Museums, Libraries, and Other City Events

Various City agencies and cultural institutions have organized special events, exhibitions, and tours to commemorate Black History Month, including:

**NYC Department of Parks & Recreation:** [http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/black\\_history\\_month](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/black_history_month)

**Brooklyn Public Library:** <http://www.bklynlibrary.org/calendar/list/Black%20History%20Month>

**New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture:** <http://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg>



# Parent to Parent with Yolanda Torres

Executive Superintendent of the Division of Family and Community Engagement

Dear Parents:



February is a very special month, as we all have a wonderful opportunity to embrace the beauty of our diverse City by celebrating Black History Month and the Lunar New Year while embarking on a campaign to ensure “Respect for All.” With that said, it is only when we share and discover the ways that we are similar as well as different that we truly begin to understand and accept one another. In our schools, this acceptance happens when we open our hearts and minds to our fellow parents and to all students that our children interact with every day.

As parents, we are our children’s first and most important teachers and role models, and because of this, they will surely emulate us as they grow older. While it is true that we may not all share other cultures’ beliefs and customs, we can certainly take part in experiencing the richness of other culture’s languages, food and rituals. Naturally, we all want the same thing for our children: academic success and positive growth so that they may become good citizens to each other and to the world around them. That is the common ground we can start with; the particulars of how we dress, eat, speak, and believe are what add the spice to life.

Certainly, as we are all a little overworked and overextended, we could use a dose of joy, humor, and fun, right? As you celebrate diversity this month, take an opportunity to eat food that you have not tried before, and have your children teach you about the traditions that brought that food to the table. Likewise, help your children become stronger global citizens by learning other cultures’ phrases, or by asking your children to share interesting bits of history concerning different groups of people from their own. The differences between what you are used to and other cultures’ customs will surely be fascinating, and the similarities you observe will be familiar and reassuring at the same time.

Let’s keep the conversation going.

Best,

Yolanda Torres

## Celebrating the Lunar New Year

For the first time ever, on February 8, all New York City public schools were closed in recognition of the Lunar New Year.



This holiday, which is celebrated by billions around the world, including thousands of

New Yorkers across the five boroughs, is a tradition that dates back over 4,000 years. The DOE is proud to be the largest school district in the country to add the Lunar New Year to its official public school calendar, as this recognition sets a high bar of inclusiveness for the rest of the country.

The DOE wishes everyone a wonderful and joyous Year of the Monkey.

## Free Microsoft Software for City Students & Their Families

Starting this month, all parents and guardians with children who attend New York City public schools will now have free access to Microsoft software and services. Thanks to a partnership between the Department of Education, Microsoft, and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, parents/guardians of City students across all five boroughs will be able to download the following Microsoft digital products free of charge:

- Office 365 ProPlus on Windows (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Skype for Business, Access, InfoPath and Publisher)
- Office for Mac Professional 2016 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote)
- Office for iPad, iPhone, Android (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote)



In addition, all City students and their parents/guardians will have free online access to Microsoft's Cloud service as well as Office Online.

Parents will be able to download Microsoft software on up to five family computers and five family tablets, smartphones, and other mobile devices. To download this software, parents should visit <https://studentoffice.net> and enter their home phone number or email address in addition to their child's date of birth.

Any parent/guardian who is having difficulties registering for the Microsoft software should speak directly with staff members at their schools' main offices. Please note that government-issued photo identification may be required by schools to verify home addresses and other contact information.

## NYC School Survey Coming Soon

Later this month, the DOE will release the 2015-2016 NYC School Survey, one of the nation's largest surveys of any kind. Now in its ninth year, the NYC School Survey is distributed to every teacher, student, and student's parents/guardians in grades 6-12. The Survey helps school leaders understand what their school communities are saying about their respective learning environments, and nearly 1 million people complete it every year. Schools welcome the data they receive from the Surveys, as the information helps to support dialogue among school staff members regarding how best to improve their schools.

This year, the NYC School Survey will be distributed to teachers at the end of February, while parents and students will receive their survey materials during their schools' official Parent-Teacher Conferences in March. Contact your schools to confirm when Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled to take place.

The NYC School Survey will close on Friday, April 1. For more information about the Survey, including last year's questions and results, please visit our website (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/survey/default.htm>).

Children born in 2012 are eligible to apply for free, full-day, high-quality pre-k.

Visit [nyc.gov/prek](http://nyc.gov/prek) | Call 311 |

Text "prek" to 877-877

**PRE-K  
FOR ALL**



# Celebrating RESPECT FOR ALL WEEK



During the week of February 9 – 12, all New York City public schools celebrate Respect for All Week, an annual celebration of the efforts our schools make to teach students to understand and accept one another, regardless of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or social standing. Throughout the week, schools have the opportunity to begin new initiatives that promote respect for diversity, such as class lessons, field trips, or other activities that focus on preventing bias-based harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Each day during the week highlights a different theme which schools are encouraged to align their instruction with accordingly:

## DAY 1 **Bullying 101 and How to Be an Ally**

What are bullying and cyberbullying? What can students do when they are victims or when they know someone else who has been victimized?

## DAY 2 **Religion, Race, and Respect**

How to recognize and confront religious and racial bias.

## DAY 3 **Pride**

Understanding sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

## DAY 4 **No One Eats Alone**

In celebration of national No One Eats Alone Day, all schools are encouraged to have their students connect and engage with their peers in an effort to combat social isolation.

For more information about Respect for All Week, please visit our webpage (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OSYD/RespectForAllWeek/default.htm>).

If you would like to learn more about how your school is celebrating the week this year, contact your school's parent coordinator.

## **Stay Informed About the Zika Virus**

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has issued a warning to all New Yorkers about the Zika virus. For the latest alerts and guidance, including travel warnings

and advice for pregnant women, please visit DOHMH's website: <http://nyc.gov/health/zika>

You may also follow @NYCHealthy, @DrMaryTBassett, and @DrJayVarma on Twitter for the latest updates about the Zika virus.



### ***Each Kindness***

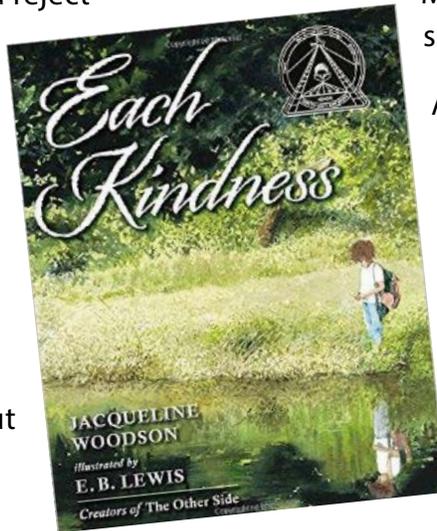
By Jacqueline Woodson

Illustrated by E.B. Lewis

(Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012)

Maya is a new student who arrives at school during the winter wearing spring shoes and old, ragged clothes. The other students immediately notice that Maya is different and reject her attempts to play cards, jacks, or pickup sticks with them. Chloe, who's seated next to Maya, refuses to even return the new girl's smile. Then one day, when Maya doesn't show up for class, the teacher leads a discussion about kindness—and Chloe learns an important lesson about missed opportunities and the consequences of withholding compassion.

Chloe narrates a powerful story for the reader about a more subtle form of bullying—social rejection—which can be as emotionally searing as verbal taunts and threats. From day one, Chloe and her classmates distance themselves from the new student. When Maya whispers something to Chloe in class, another student teases, "Chloe's got a new friend," to which Chloe responds, "She's not my friend." In the spring, when Maya shows up wearing a pretty secondhand dress and fancy shoes, instead of complimenting her, her classmates call her "Never New" behind her back. As readers, we



wish Chloe would have the courage to break the silence.

The day Maya's seat goes empty, the teacher, Ms. Albert, brings a large bowl to class. As students gather round, she fills it with water and drops a small stone into the bowl. "This is what kindness does," Ms. Albert says, referring to the tiny waves rippling out. "Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world."

Moved by this lesson, Chloe hopes Maya will return to class so that she can smile back and say all the things she wishes she'd said. But Maya's family has moved away, and Chloe is left pondering each kindness she withheld from Maya, each of the lonely girl's gifts she rebuffed.

Although this book does not have a happy ending, it provides an opening for rich discussions about social bullying and rejection, the equally harmful role of being a bystander, and the difference that small acts of kindness can make in a person's life. As parents and educators, we must teach our children that words and actions have consequences that cannot

always be undone. Students must learn to put themselves in another person's shoes, accept their differences, and celebrate their common ground.

We must also be sensitive as adults not to isolate one another. Whether we are communicating parent to parent, teacher to parent, or parent to teacher, we must all take care to be inclusive and respectful while honoring our diversity. In the end, it is far better to show kindness than to be burdened by a life of regrets.

Let us all take Ms. Albert's lesson to heart and commit to creating positive ripples in the world.

# Parent Leader Corner

## PA/PTA Elections Are Coming Sooner Than You Think...

As you know, Parent Associations (PA)/Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) must conduct annual elections by the last day of the school year. However, planning ahead is essential in order to avoid a last minute frenzy. Aim for your election as soon as possible to avoid Murphy's Law (if something can go wrong, it will). Remember: if your last meeting of the year lacks quorum, you will have to wait the entire summer before you are allowed an expedited election.

## How Early Should You Begin the Entire Election Process?

PA/PTAs must notify the school's principal of the date and time of the annual PA/PTA election by April 1. As they say in the business world, "Picture your goal and work backwards." As you plan the upcoming PA/PTA election cycle, a good rule of thumb is to look at your calendar, find the last day of school and work backwards from there. The earlier the election, the more time the executive board will have to transition and plan – which will help your school's PA/PTA function well. Consider taking your first steps in early March.

## Diversity Matters

As we celebrate Black History and the Lunar New

Year this month, let's not forget how important it is for your PA/PTA to reflect the diversity of your school's parent body. We all tend to reach out to the same people when we have a need, but in order to create the most inclusive and vibrant team, try to involve parents of all backgrounds in the election process.

## What Does the Nominating Committee Do?

The nominating committee is responsible for talking to parents about the roles and responsibilities of each officer and gauging the interest of parents who are willing to serve as officers. The committee's outreach can include an early request for nominations, announcements in school newsletters or publications that are backpacked home, as well as in-person announcements at school events. It is also a good idea to get students involved by announcing the nominations in the school's "Morning Announcements" – encouraging students to ask their parents to become involved in the PA/PTA election.

To learn more about the PA/PTA elections cycle, please visit Chancellor's Regulation A-660. Also found at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EBEFFD82-30D5-4B91-9F9A-6A07B0D0F2D6/0/A660.pdf#page=13>.

## Dates to Remember

**February 15-19** Mid-winter Recess

**March 2** (Evening) – **3** (Afternoon)  
Parent-Teacher Conferences (Elementary Schools)

**March 7** (Evening) – **8** (Afternoon)  
Parent-Teacher Conferences (D75 Programs)

**March 10** (Evening) – **11** (Afternoon)  
Parent-Teacher Conferences (High Schools)

**March 16** (Evening) – **17**  
(Afternoon) Parent-Teacher Conferences  
(Middle Schools)

**March 25** Good Friday (All Schools Are Closed)