

June 19, 2020

Dear Principals and Teachers,

Juneteenth marks the date when the emancipation of enslaved Africans in the confederate state of Texas learned of their freedom, two and a half years subsequent to President Lincoln's proclamation. This news ultimately altered the trajectory of the lives of those who were enslaved. It also created challenges politically, socially and economically for ex-slaves, who struggled to assimilate in society post-slavery. Although the government attempted to provide solutions to these challenges through legislation and social programs, life continued to be an uphill battle. Hundreds of years later, we are still on the battlefield.

All across the country, descendants of emancipated enslaved Africans are celebrating their freedom and their rich culture derived from the African Diaspora on Juneteenth. They celebrate their contributions in science, arts, mathematics, and more, in a country that has not fully acknowledged or valued those contributions.

Standing together in the present day when the consequences of history are still alive all around us, you as educators are critical in the process of empowering the changemakers: our students. This celebration of Juneteenth is also a call to action for us as educators, individually and collectively as a community.

In celebration of Juneteenth, we have compiled resources for you to share with your students as you engage in reflection and discussion. This celebration comes at a time when we, as a nation, have undergone profound emotional experiences in the last several weeks and months. These culturally responsive and sustaining resources will help illuminate students' identities and histories, and will light the way to difficult yet meaningful conversations about race, racism, and anti-racism learning. We encourage you to use and share them on Juneteenth, but they are also relevant beyond June 19th as they speak to a long and unfinished thread of American history.

Please explore and use these resources, available on the [InfoHub](#). You can also find additional resources we have previously shared with you on teaching about race and justice in the past and present at schools.nyc.gov/strivingforjustice.

We hope that these resources will inspire you and our students to engage and reflect on the impact that our history has on us today, so that our students may become change agents for their communities.

In unity,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education