



## Black Educator Excellence Needs to be Celebrated

By Educator Barnes – May 29, 2020

During the last couple of weeks, educators have found ways to celebrate students although school buildings remain closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Educators should not be left out of the celebration. It is important to lift up their labor to serve students. Many times, excellent Black educators are not recognized. Emil Ekiyor, former Indiana Black Expo Indy

Chapter President, wanted to put an end to this. Thus, the annual African American Excellence in Education Awards was conceived. This year marks the fourth annual event. In addition to support from the Indiana Black Expo, the awards committee has also partnered with [Educate Me](#), [The Indianapolis Recorder](#), and Indy K12.

Last year, the event was held at Martin University and recipients received congressional recognition from Congressman André D. Carson. A few educators also received a plaque for a specific Excellence in Education award such as excellence in leadership. This year, recipients will receive congressional recognition and their picture will be included in a special edition of The Indianapolis Recorder.

Despite pushback about having education awards for just Black educators, and not all educators, including from some Black educators, the award committee intends to press on. Committee member, Marlon Llewellyn shared, "While we speak about the importance of more Black representation in our podcasts, tweets, and strategic plans, it's like pulling teeth to get principals and district leaders to take a moment to recognize their best and brightest Black educators."

This award has a special meaning to Black educators. Elementary teacher, Juanita Price, received recognition last year. "It was humbling to know that what I thought was 'normal' was being recognized as excellence. I love what I do and appreciate that it was noticed," said Price.

Normal is the goal. Black excellence from students to educators should be the norm, and it should be celebrated. Llewellyn emphasized its importance. "The awards are an opportunity to affirm a group of Black educators who silently bear the burden of ensuring the students that look like them, and come from similar experiences, receive the best education possible. This is our way, as a committee and community, to publicly say thank you!" Recognition and affirmation are two key levers of Black educator retention.

The [nomination submission form](#) closes on June 12. Not even a pandemic should stop Black excellence from being recognized.