

# School Week of Action Brings the Go Go, Education

February 12, 2019

***By George Kevin Jordan, AFRO Staff Writer***

It was overcast outside Thursday afternoon, but a light of enthusiasm brightened the music room at Anacostia High School, 1601 16th Street, S.E.

“This is a beat and a culture that comes from our city,” said William “JuJu” House, legendary go-go drummer and musician, as he invited several Anacostia High School students to get into the pocket.



*Legendary Go-Go Drummer/Musician William "JuJu" House with Anacostia High School students. (Photo by George Kevin Jordan)*

The pocket is a unique go-go style, beat and rhythm born and cultivated out of D.C. The students were shy for about 15 seconds before each one moved behind the drum set and flexed their musical muscles.

The beats and lessons learned were part of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) at School Week of Action that took place at several different school across the DMV area.

Deborah Menkart, executive director of Teaching for Change, a national organization based out of D.C., said the week is part of a more expansive approach to educate about different histories and cultures.

“A lot of our work is centered around teaching the history that’s left out of the curriculum, and ensuring from early childhood on to high, that we challenge the dominant narrative around race, class and gender,” Menkart told the *AFRO*.

Although teachers have been teaching about social justice for a long time, Menkart said this is the second year of a formal collaboration of organizations that brings together teachers from D.C., Maryland and Virginia. It was also the second year that D.C. Area Educators for Social Justice (a project of Teaching for Change) and other collaborators brought BLM at School Week of Action to the DMV area. It first started in Seattle and then moved to Philadelphia.

“The Black Lives Matter [at School] Week of Action really helps deepen how we teach Black history during the month of February and all year long,” Menkart said.

[Black Lives Matter](#) is the global network known for engaging discourses,

protests and education around social justice and equality for Black people.

“I believe the response has really been enriching for our students,” said William Haith, principal of Anacostia High School. “We talk about exposure and how important it is for our students and when you look at BLM it’s important for our students to understand their culture and our history.”

Media specialist and librarian at Anacostia Nia Nicholas said the event was well received and needed.

“We’ve never has the Black Lives [Matter] moment here for a week,” Nicholas said. “I’m truly excited.”

“Yesterday we had Black Lives Matter [representatives] come to the classroom and teach about the 13 principles. We learned how that organization was formed based on those principles and then how as a school we can adopt those same principles in our community. And now kids are excited and asking what’s happening tomorrow.”

Those principles encourage positivity around diversity, empathy, the role of Black women, and restorative justice to name a few.

Nicholas said the week of engagement helped to propel students and staff more towards social justice.

“It’s about teaching students how to advocate for themselves and making them global citizens in this society.”

During the week, there were workshops, guest lectures and performances, as well as visits from the representative from Black Lives Matter D.C.

*The week ran through Feb. 8. To learn more about the week of action, including D.C. area endorsers, a full calendar of events, resources for*

*educators and more, visit <http://bit.ly/blmdc2019>.*