COOPER ACADEMY’S BLACK STUDENT UNION (BSU) IN ACTION

In yet another show of excellence, representatives of Cooper Academy’s Black Students Union (BSU), Olyvia Dejean and Sarehi Hall-Millan, spoke of their efforts in promoting Black excellence at their school site. Olyvia and Sarehi spoke of the BSU’s recent initiative with spreading awareness of lesser-known Black leaders, including civil rights activist Claudette Colvin, baseball player Josh Gibson, and jazz trumpeter Gerald Wilson, by preparing posters, and speaking on stage to an intrigued audience. Friends of the two, as well as their School Counselor, Michael Yates, spoke of their confidence with speaking on stage and representing Black history to their peers. As an advocate on campus, Michael has helped lead and develop student organization initiatives on campus; being described by the two students as someone who always makes them feel welcome on the school site. The students also spoke of the need to see textbooks that reflect Black excellence and innovation, as well as wanting to know more about Fresno's Black history.

MEET THE NEW CHIEF OF EQUITY: CARLOS CASTILLO

As a Fresno native, Carlos has experienced first-hand changes in the district - as a student, paraeducator, teacher, Vice Principal, Principal, and Central Office employee. With his keen awareness of inequitable practices across our school district and our community and the understanding of the multitude of needs to be addressed; equity has always been close to his heart. Carlos recognizes the need to deliver a customized approach to our school sites and school regions on issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and continuing to build upon the great structures our district has in place.
THOMAS ELEMENTARY’S BLACK STUDENT UNION (BSU) CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Thomas Elementary’s Black Student Union (BSU) leaders Cammie Southern and Tamika Tatum took some time to explain some of the projects and activities the BSU students had worked on for Black History Month. Cammie shared that the club continues to work towards excellence in voice, leadership, community service, culture, and academics, which the BSU’s 35 strong members demonstrate through regular community service and academic projects. One project the (BSU) club had worked on for Black History Month was a live portrayal of famous African Americans throughout history. The live museum involved students researching African American individuals, collecting artifacts, decorating booths, dressing-up and portraying their chosen person in a live-museum-format to the entire student body. Ray’Annah Ayers, a Thomas Elementary student, shared her thoughts on why she enjoyed the live museum so much, saying the "live museum portrayed a historical person, [and an opportunity to] write and learn about them because I did not know about them, I also enjoyed when different classes got to walk in and see all of our hard work". Another event that took place at Thomas Elementary for Black History Month was the visit of award-winning author and poet L. Kobie Wilkerson (Kobie Da Wiz). Through Kobie’s presentation, students learned that in storytelling, if they can think it, they can speak it; if they can speak it, they can write it; if they can write it, they can tell the story. Students from Thomas Elementary’s BSU had a VIP meet and greet with Kobie Da Wiz and an opportunity to ask questions and have their books signed.