



BSD Superintendent <superintendent@bsdvt.org>

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## MLK Day: Reaffirming our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

1 message

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**Superintendent Flanagan** <superintendent@bsdvt.org>

Mon, Jan 20, 2025 at 11:24 AM

Reply-To: superintendent@bsdvt.org

To: superintendent@bsdvt.org

January 20, 2025

Dear BSD families and staff,

Good morning and Happy Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day!

Today, we remember Dr. King's life and legacy—his fight to end racism, poverty, and militarism, and his vision for a ["Beloved Community"](#). This is a community where justice, nonviolence, and inclusion replace hatred and division. As we celebrate Dr. King today, we honor his work with deep respect and appreciation and recognize that these beliefs still require our attention as we strive to make the world a better place.

In BSD, [we believe](#) diversity and inclusion are key to strong schools and communities. When I arrived in 2020, we had solid policies in place supporting these values. As we partnered with our community to build our current strategic plan, it was clear that our staff feel this way, our students feel this way, and the Burlington community feels this way. As a new administration prepares to lead our country, I'm proud to say that BSD remains 100% committed to Dr. King's work, and will continue to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in our schools, our city, and our broader community.

In the past few years, our district has focused our professional learning on anti-racist teaching and leadership. This is part of our work to acknowledge that White Supremacy Culture exists and that we need to work together to create a more just and equitable culture for all. We have created a strategic plan designed to reduce the opportunity gaps influenced by race, ability, and income, we have worked with students and staff to understand their experience and implemented their ideas to make our schools better for them; as a result, we have developed procedures to protect our LGBTQIA+ community, we have created safe spaces for students and staff of different identities, races, and cultures to gather, and we are redesigning our systems to better support students with disabilities.

We see from the data in our annual climate survey that when we do this work, all of our children benefit. We also know that there's much work to be done to meet our goals, and we need to keep pushing forward with these efforts. Again, I want to assure you that this commitment to DEI will not change.

In preparation for the change in administration, we finalized procedures ensuring that we support students' access to education and privacy, and that our staff know how to respond appropriately to immigration enforcement officials. We are also partnering with organizations in the city to help people who have immigrated here recently know their rights. And BSD leaders are also ready to continue our efforts to make sure our LGBTQIA+ community is safe and supported.

In short, as we celebrate Dr. King today, please know that BSD will continue to do everything we can to promote Dr. King's vision and to make Burlington schools places where all are welcome, valued, and loved, and all have the opportunity to be challenged, empowered, and engaged.

Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day.  
-Tom

*P.S. Here are a few resources we provided for staff last week. Take a look!*

### **MLK BSD Teaching Materials**

[MLK and BLM Grades 6-12](#)

[Martin's Big Words and Slam Poetry](#) Grades K-5

[How to do what's Right Lesson Plan](#) Grades K-5

[Civil Rights Timeline Slideshow](#) Grades 3-12

[MLK and Other Social Movements Lesson Plan](#) Grades 8-12

**More MLK Resources:**

- [Listen to MLK's I Have a Dream speech \(~17 mins\)](#) or [this shorter version \(~6 mins\)](#) [Read the "I Have a Dream" speech](#)
- [Read a biographical account, which includes pictures and other links](#)
- [Watch an interview on segregation](#)
- [Read a letter to Birmingham Jail](#) and [Read a poem that inspired King](#)
- [MLK Reading for Newer Readers \(level M\)](#)

*"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and think critically. Intelligence plus character; that is the goal of a true education." — Martin Luther King Jr.*

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