

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
BROWN DEER

INSPIRE • INNOVATE • LEAD

Our Second Call to Action

The School District of Brown Deer is proud to be one of the most diverse school districts in the state of Wisconsin. Families move to Brown Deer to be an integral part of a vibrant community that accepts people for who they are, celebrates diversity, and welcomes multiple perspectives. We are an All-America City. Brown Deer is a microcosm of what America should be: diverse age, economic backgrounds and culture.

Brown Deer schools intentionally operate from establishing equity in education.

We celebrate our young people. Our mission is to inspire all to become passionate learners, creative thinkers, and innovative leaders who will enrich our world. We all need to responsibly create the necessary conditions to eliminate the persistent inequities and marginalization of our students in our school communities - actions speak louder than words. We will:

- 1 Teach our school community that racism is never acceptable.
- 2 Create opportunities to engage students in diverse learning situations that will help them understand the value of different perspectives and better understand different cultures.
- 3 Develop and enact school board equity policies that explicitly state non-negotiables for conduct and much-needed values of character in our schools.
- 4 Engage our parents in learning to understand what diversity and closing achievement gaps is all about. It's a fact that every school district in our

country has an achievement gap.

- 5 Learn from other diverse school communities on how they collectively engage in discussions about race, marginalization, and inequities.

There is a fierce sense of urgency to stop racism. The American consciousness is finally awakening. Society's constructs of success are irrelevant in individuals who are judged by the color of their skin and not the content of their character. Brown Deer is willing to create a different narrative around children and families.

Our First Call to Action

This past fall, the marginalization of our Brown Deer scholar athletes occurred when White football players from another school used the "N" word directed at our quarterback and other students of color. We took action. We met with leaders from the athletic conference to create a harassment and discrimination policy to prevent this egregious behavior in the future. The situation gave us the opportunity to teach privileged individuals, across our school communities, to better understand the negative power of a word. A word they will never be subjected to, because "white privilege" allows them to navigate a society where they never have to prove their worth; where they are never second-guessed; where they do not have to work twice as hard to be considered just as good and where good is never good enough. We now have a policy that was voted into by-laws for the conference and supported by the state organization for athletics - Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association. Actions speak louder than words.

“OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER”

MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr.

Our Second Call to Action

May 2020. **Black lives matter.** We stand with our students, our staff, and families and strive to build up all of our children to advocate and speak their truth no matter the color of their skin. People of color speaking their truth can no longer be viewed as disorderly, disrespectful, or disruptive. No longer can their truth be dismissed, disregarded, or devalued.

We are living in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic and again dealing with the senseless deaths of African Americans across the United States. The first months of 2020 have become the most divisive in our history. As leaders of the most diverse school district in our region and state, we take responsibility for educating ourselves and others about the structures that perpetuate racism and oppression. We work together to change racist educational practices. Learning is part of our call to action as educators. With the recent events of police brutality, fear is running deep in many communities, protests are prevalent, and people are speaking out. We are heartbroken and devastated when we watch these repeated inequities that continue to leave lasting and painful memories for our children, our families, and our community. This trauma impacts our children, families, staff and all members of our school community.

This past week, our Village of Brown Deer took action. President Wanda Montgomery presented a proclamation to address racial inequities in our community. Here is a section of the proclamation read out loud by her at the Village Board meeting:

“The Brown Deer community is not immune from these types of issues happening here. So, we hold in our thoughts and lift up in our prayers, all those hurting in our country as a result of these great losses. Although we have not had the experience that some other communities have had, we want our community to know that we are a community that supports all of our residents. We work with all of our citizens to make sure they have equal access to all of our services and are treated with respect and integrity by the village staff and board. Dr. Martin Luther King stated “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. We proclaim that we will be one Brown Deer. We are a community that embraces all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, mental/physical ability or socio-economic status. We further proclaim that we will continue to work diligently to bring all of Brown Deer together and support a community in which we can all be proud.”

Brown Deer passed this proclamation unanimously. We will leverage our privilege to advocate on behalf of students and families. Our school district represents the real world with over 80% students of color and rising poverty over 50%. We support our children and families who have been subjected to these tragedies and who live with the fear and pain of racism every day. We will be intentional as we put this learning into action. We are in the process of re-evaluating how we teach and what

we teach for deeper learning to attain better engagement for all students and staff. We have been planning for re-entry and recovery since April as we know we will not have another chance to get this right.

Listen, Reflect, and Learn

We call on you to unite and not divide: work together to engage in courageous conversations rather than being silent and complicit. We call on you to see our diversity as strength for collective change. We call on you to interrupt systems of oppression and instead advance the cause of human dignity and social justice. It is never too late to speak up and speak out. The time is now.

We call on you to recognize the systemic racism that has historically occurred in our country. The deep-rooted systemic racism continues to wound communities of color and impacts every one of us. Eradication of racism and marginalization is the work of every community, just like it's the responsibility of every community to eliminate achievement gaps.

As a district we will continue working from our Brown Deer Way virtues of character, focusing on the whole child, growth mindset, rigorous learning expectations, and developing nurturing relationships with our young people. We approach our students and staff as a family. We will work from a place of care and love for the whole child and whole staff member. This requires us to listen more than we speak and ask our families what we can do to support. We model acceptance of all through our outreach and communication. We are not perfect and don't always get things right, however, we continue to provide access and opportunity to all of our children as equity is at the heart of all that we do. To support our call to action, there are resources on our website that provide information to better understand racism and equity. Together, we will learn and reflect upon the conversations that are essential to move our school district and community forward. Watch for more details about future programming.

Actions Speak Louder than Words

We have opportunities to rebuild our educational

system to meet the diverse needs of all students and our school community. This is our chance to have a personalized educational system that promotes student voice and agency. The road to a better future is where all people come together with respect. As Martin Luther King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

The Brown Deer School District will walk together, each step of the way, with our community to make the lives of others better, to move forward together in peace, and to create the best educational system possible. Together will we be the change that will heal, restore, and achieve justice for all. We are a community and people of action. Together, we will find a way. It's the Brown Deer Way!

Yours in Education,

Dr. Todd Beadle - School Board President

Dr. Deb Kerr - Outgoing Superintendent

Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown - Incoming Superintendent

Willie Garrison II - Director of Teaching & Learning

Resources

[Brown Deer School District Website](#)

[The Traumatic Impact of Racism and Discrimination on Young People and How to Talk About It](#)

[Approaching Racism with Compassion and Humility](#)

[How Trauma Affects Families](#)

[Age Related Reactions to Traumatic Event](#)

[Parent Article on How to Talk to Your Child About Race and Racism](#)