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## Black History Month Message From Superintendent Rundle

1 message

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Fred Rundle, Ed.D, Superintendent

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Dear Mercer Island Community,

To kickstart the second half of the 2022-2023 school year MISD celebrates Black History Month. We must continue confronting, reconciling, and celebrating our nation's past. The atrocities of slavery, complexities of Jim Crow, hidden biases, overt prejudices, and systemic racism call us to action, past and present. And while the images of pain and struggle are often used to portray black and African American History, I encourage us to also focus on the stories of greatness, contribution, and innovation.

- Consistent with the focus we have this year on broadcasting student voices, I would like to highlight some of our students and how they are elevating Black History Month. The Mercer Island High School Black Student Union (BSU) has been working this year to unify voices. They will host a dinner and gathering of students and families who identify as black or African American. The BSU has been fostering a deeper sense of belonging for black students in elementary, middle, and high school. This has included mentorship between high school and elementary students, student presentations to faculty, and meeting regularly as a group.
- Rachel Senn and the Student Voices for Change, another MIHS student group, put together a compilation of elementary resources families and classrooms can use during the month of February to feature Black History Month. [Please feel free to use their work in your homes, places of worship, and throughout the community.](#)
- At Islander Middle School, students and staff will be honoring Black History Month in a variety of ways, including lessons during Gator Time. [Here are some sample resources and activities.](#) IMS will also partner with a Director of Equity from a neighboring private school to build student and staff strategies to engage learners who take responsibility for themselves, the classroom and the school.

These student and staff initiatives exemplify the ways our students are shaping our schools and staff serves as facilitators. Students are modeling for us ways to promote togetherness and a deeper sense of belonging.

Throughout February our schools will host and facilitate a variety of experiences for students to continue learning about black and African American contributions to communities near and far. I encourage us all to lean into conversations with our students and children, engage in uncomfortable discussions, and know that it is alright to say to our kids, "I don't know, but it would be interesting to learn more together."

In addition to Black History Month, February also hosts [President's Day](#) and [Random Acts of Kindness Day](#). President's Day is celebrated on the third Monday in February, and is a national holiday that celebrates all U.S. Presidents. This year President's Day will be observed on Monday, February 20, which is also our mid-winter break. Random Acts of Kindness Day will be on February 17. This is a whole day dedicated to just being kind in random ways to remind us that we do not need to wait for anything special to simply be kind to others.

Enjoy the month of February.

2/1/23, 4:06 PM

Mercer Island School District #400 Mail - Black History Month Message From Superintendent Rundle

**Fred Rundle**  
Superintendent

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