



# MEDIA STATEMENT

November 19, 2020

## BURLINGTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT SEEKS EQUITABLE EDUCATION

For several years, the Burlington Area School District has been working to implement purposeful and systematic change to create a more equitable environment for all students. We recognize that equity in education allows all students to develop a sense of identity and belonging while reaching their full potential. There is always more that can be done to assist our students of color, students with disabilities, and students from economically disadvantaged families. We understand that in order for students to learn - which is our core mission - students need to feel safe and included.

In the past year, we have intensified our efforts through professional development for staff, launching SHARE (Students Helping Advance Racial Equity) clubs, reviewing curriculum and resources available to see what is being taught and where gaps exist. This work is being influenced by hearing from students and families in our district who have experienced trauma in school. We will continue to listen to gain new insight in order to learn and create change.

The district works in collaboration with the National Equity Project, Payne & Frazier, the Milwaukee Jewish Federation (which provides the Hours Against Hate program), and Teaching Tolerance. We recognize that in order to change our culture, we need to change ourselves.

On Monday, November 16, the BASD School Board took a critical first step toward adopting an anti-harassment / anti-racism policy that the board has on its agenda for adoption on November 30. Policy is one tool, but it takes intentional action to create an anti-racist culture.

Our journey to become an anti-racist community has just begun. Unfortunately, while we have been seeking impactful change, we have also had to deal with hate crimes within our community. We have repeated, and will say again, that the district is fully committed to serving as a learning community that is both anti-racist and healing-centered while rejecting all forms of racism on and off school grounds.

For more details about the Burlington Area School District's effort toward creating a safer, more equitable school environment, we are beginning to develop a website that highlights some of our efforts to date.

Link: <https://www.basd.k12.wi.us/district/educating-for-equity.cfm#d770532>

We did not participate in today's Racine Interfaith Coalition Zoom call.

### **Equity Statement / Vision**

*The Burlington Area School District rejects all forms of racism, discrimination and harassment of students, families, staff members, and / or visitors in our schools. Such behaviors will be treated as being destructive to the District's mission, vision, values, and goals. The District pledges and is committed to providing a physically and psychologically safe, secure and respectful environment, free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color and national origin.*

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