

(1/17/24 District Administrator's Corner Article)

"This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine ..." I can remember practicing verses and actions to this song as a kid growing up. *"I won't let evil blow it out - I'm gonna let it shine."*

This freedom song is often used to celebrate and teach our youngest learners about the significance of freedom and Martin Luther King Jr. Day. It offers us all a chance to consider the late civil rights leader and the historical significance of the unrest in the 1950s and 1960s as they struggled to end segregation through peaceful protests and nonviolent marches.

Martin Luther King Day is the perfect time to teach students about civic responsibility. It allows teachers to share that we can stand up for our beliefs and be involved in the solutions. We hope that all students learn to become *"engaged citizens; critical consumers of information; actively involved in the civil discourse of their communities, state, nation, and world; to understand and actively participate in the processes of government, including voting; and are empowered to see themselves as essential members of their communities"* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/social-studies/civics>).

On Aug. 28, 1963, Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech was a call to end racism in America, and is one of the most memorable speeches in history. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks to a day when his children will "live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Martin Luther King's message clearly conveys the deeper message of seeing beyond a glance and being known for character. Something we all must consider. It allows our community to celebrate the beauty of diversity, reminding us that every person should be treated the same - with kindness.

Diversity is important. I want all children to be known for their character and their convictions to themselves, to their community and their family. We must remain committed to the deeper significance of Dr. King's dream. But, this requires that we stay open-minded, respectful and respected. In the River Valley School District, we are very proud to let all little lights shine. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District