



WEST CHICAGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Board of Education

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Jenny Brunke, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning
DATE: January 22, 2026
RE: MLK Recognition

This memo is:

- ☒ Information only
☐ Information with a recommendation and a request for Board approval by vote.

Date by which a Board decision is needed:

Previous memos on this topic can be found:

- ☐ in previous Board packet(s) dated.
☐ or attached to this memo

Basic Information:
<p>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a federal holiday in the United States honoring the achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - the chief spokesman for nonviolent activism in the civil rights movement to end racial segregation. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the third Monday of January each year, which is closest to January 15, Martin Luther King's birthday. This year, it is celebrated on Monday, January 19th.</p> <p>Below, each school highlights how they honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to showcase their commitment to the values he advocated.</p>
Background/Historical Context:
<p>Martin Luther King, Jr. was instrumental in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination in public accommodations, facilities, and employment, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964. As of the year 2000, all of the states officially recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day in his honor.</p>
Previous decisions, actions, or parameters that relate to this topic or issue:
<p>Below is a summary of activities to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr the week of January 19th.</p> <p>Pioneer Preschool: Instruction for preschool students contains examples of heroes, including Martin Luther King Jr., in their January Units 1 and 2 reviews. Teachers explore with students what it means to be kind and help one another. Students participate in acts of kindness in their classrooms and around the school. Teachers reference MLK and other heroes who have given us examples of compassion and service to each other.</p> <p>Kindergarten - 5th grade: Kindergarten through 5th-grade classrooms across the district were provided a choice board of activities to utilize with students in their classrooms. The purpose of the choice board is to</p>

offer autonomy for teachers in each classroom while still providing consistency in student experience across the district. The choice board includes a variety of options such as recommended texts to be read aloud to students by the classroom teacher or guest reader, videos providing information about Martin Luther King Jr., his life, and his contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, and various online activities aligned to the K-2 and 3-5 grade bands.

Leman Middle School:

6th-grade: SEL students learned about bias, bullying, and prejudice. They discussed how Dr. Martin Luther King worked for justice and equality in the face of prejudice. They connected his actions to steps that can be taken now, in 2025, to confront bias and bullying. ELA is working on its Civil Rights Unit, and students must complete a research project about a Civil Rights leader. Civics is working on their activism and civil rights.

7th-grade: During Social Studies classes, students will engage in discussions on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr focused on the impact his life had on the United States. Students will then participate in an inspirational quote activity where they will receive an inspirational quote from Dr. King on a footprint. Students will personalize the footprint and add a note on how they can change the world. Footprints will be cut out and displayed in the hallways of LMS.

8th Grade: In ELA, students are studying rhetorical devices in Martin Luther King's speeches and letters and crafting arguments about the most influential Civil Rights leaders of our time. This includes analyzing the author's purpose and point of view behind their work and writing. In social studies, specifically for MLK Jr. Day, students participated in a virtual field trip to the MLK Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC. As a class, students reflected on the opportunities to serve the community on MLK Jr. Day and how to live out his message daily.

School-wide: A library display honors the work of Dr. Martin Luther King. Morning announcements featured his quotes and related the quotes to our Leman Values.

Recommendations:

N/A