



# SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 25, 2019

## SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL TO FLY BLACK LIVES MATTER FLAG IN FEBRUARY 2019

SOUTH BURLINGTON -- The South Burlington School District (SBSD) is proud to announce that South Burlington High School (SBHS) students will raise the Black Lives Matter Flag on February 1, 2019, to fly during Black History Month.

In an excerpt from their Statement of Intent, the Black Lives Matter Flag Raising Committee (comprised of students, staff and School Board members) noted, “Our purpose is to engage our school community in hopes that all will leave with a greater understanding of racial inequity, more specifically its impact throughout Vermont and our country as a whole. The flag will be a reminder that history, including Black history, is not just something of the past. History is constantly being made. This flag and this movement are a part of it.” (*The full statement is available below.*)

The flag raising follows a thoughtful, year-long process where the student-led Student Diversity Union (now Student Justice Union) worked closely with South Burlington High School to develop and then present a proposal brought before the SBSBD School Board on May 16, 2018. On June 6, 2018, the School Board unanimously passed a motion supporting the raising of the Black Lives Matter flag beginning in February 2019 and thereafter every February.

Educational events for students and staff leading up to the flag raising ceremony include advisory activities designed to raise awareness about equity and an assembly preceding the flag raising for SBHS students and staff. The work is connected to the disposition for lifelong learning, personal development and citizenship components of the District Ends policy.

Superintendent David Young noted, “We are proud of our students and their willingness to engage all of us in a courageous conversation about race. The Black Lives Flag Raising is an important, student-led event. We see it essential as part of the District’s larger work, work that includes staff training in anti-bias education and implicit bias. We are committed to building a school district that allows all students to show up in our schools as their full selves.”

SBHS Principal Patrick Burke stated, “As principal I stand with the students in their desire to help the District send a message to our students of color that they matter. I support them in their goal of raising awareness that South Burlington is a changing community, and I accept their challenge that I do more as an educational leader to address racial inequities that exist in our system.”

Students hope that the Black Lives Matter Flag Raising will “generate a courageous, community-wide conversation about racial inequity and recognize a month of celebration of the achievements of Black Americans and their contributions to our country.”

Further information is available on the SBSB website: [www.sbschools.net](http://www.sbschools.net).

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### **Black Lives Matter Flag Raising Committee Statement of Intent**

South Burlington students, with the full support of the South Burlington School District, are raising the Black Lives Matter flag. The flag signifies our commitment to creating a just, equitable, and empathetic world. It is a symbol of inclusion, especially for our students of color.

Injustice and racism are an ongoing struggle in our nation and our South Burlington Community. This continues to traumatize and exclude traditionally marginalized groups. The Black Lives Matter movement affirms the value of Black Lives in response to the racism that infiltrates every institution in the United States.

Our purpose is to engage our school community in hopes that all will leave with a greater understanding of racial inequity, more specifically its impact throughout Vermont and our country as a whole. The flag will be a reminder that history, including Black history, is not just something of the past. History is constantly being made. This flag and this movement are a part of it.

The raising of the Black Lives Matter flag is our kick-off to Black History Month. We intend for it to generate a courageous, community-wide conversation about racial inequity and recognize a month of celebration of the achievements of Black Americans and their contributions to our country.