

Dr. King's Vision and Beloved Community Charter School

The education model at the heart of the Beloved Community Charter School wraps powerful values and character development protocols, rooted in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s concept of the "Beloved Community," around the most sustainable and scalable best-practices of America's top-performing charter school operators.

Dr. King affirmed the historic American notion that justice requires the securing of each individual's natural rights, and he believed that securing such rights facilitated individual and societal well-being. But Dr. King said, "Our ultimate end must be the creation of the Beloved Community," by which he meant a society where people care about one another and perceive their well-being as intimately connected to every other person's. "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality," he said. "The 'I' cannot attain fulfillment without the 'Thou.'"

The founders of the Beloved Community Charter School share these convictions and believe that an education which makes children feel loved, that leads them to care about one another and to want to develop their minds and potential to positively contribute to their communities, and that successfully teaches the high level skills and knowledge necessary to make such contributions, will work to advance societal goals as diverse as individual happiness, social comity and national prosperity.

The mission of the Beloved Community Charter School is to develop values, skills, knowledge, confidence and character in its students that will lead them to care not only about themselves but about their peers and humankind; will propel them to success at the school, in college, and in their careers; and will help them realize the fulfillment of a socially contributory life.

Academically, the school will:

- Establish a strong foundation of learning habits, critical thinking skills, knowledge, and confidence from the earliest grades so students can excel academically in the middle grades and in high school
- Ensure all students develop high-level math and science understandings
- Emphasize the disciplines of writing, logic, rhetoric, and oratory
- Prepare students to be good citizens and leaders in their chosen fields
- Ensure that *every* graduate is prepared for and admitted to college

Distinctive elements of the school will include:

- A high-expectations/no excuses academic culture and a caring school climate
- Positive values, habits, character and community building
- A carefully sequenced curriculum, aligned with all state and common core standards
- Instructional groupings by students' level of standards mastery, not categorizations of ability
- Teacher-led instruction with extensive professional development support for teachers
- A novel system of class prefects and peer-tutoring
- The extensive use of educator-empowering formative assessments

- A sophisticated academic performance monitoring and parental communication system
- Carefully crafted, non-stigmatizing interventions when a student exhibits difficulty mastering a standard – including tutoring in very small groups from Language Arts/Literacy and/or Math specialists who serve on staff full-time
- A longer school day with more time for critical learning
- Student Life activities that teach confidence, initiative, and leadership
- An academy system that divides the larger school into smaller schools
- In high school, Advanced Placement and college-level courses

The school's founders will be seeking to refine their model in a way that will facilitate its adoption by district-operated public schools and spur improvements in public education far beyond the Beloved Community Charter School network.