I was inspired by pop artists and my school mascot to create this painting. The title represents the various cultures at our school.
I made this painting to symbolize power, confidence, and the inspiration to face life head on.

“Who Are We” by Justin Russell, 2019-2020 8th grader

WHO ARE WE?
We are fun, smiles and laughter
Funny but yet love, caring during disaster
We are the teacher turned preachers
of education the pastors
where the students who proving
the future matter

WE ARE
Dreamers
where respectful, kind, nice, creative
people with regrets
smart when we wanna
we always try our best
might argue with teacher
to see it from our perspective

WE ARE BLACK HAWK
Black Hawk Middle School is a vibrant, diverse, and evolving northside Madison school with over 425 students and 60 staff. We hold anti-racist education as a priority in our equity vision. Therefore, our staff is committed to working toward a more equitable, just, and rigorous educational experience for all students. Anti-racist education at Black Hawk means that all staff are committed to a community of learning - one in which we unpack our privileges and biases in order to strengthen our understanding of ourselves, one another, and the system and institution we work in. We work toward this vision by uplifting and celebrating Black Excellence, developing learning partnerships with families and students, and centering the cultural strengths of our community. Excellence for all of our students requires many commitments: a spirit of inquiry, collaboration and discourse, asking for and listening to multiple perspectives, addressing the root causes of inequity, and adapting to challenges in innovative ways. With these commitments, we hope for positive academic outcomes for all of our students and a strong sense of belonging at Black Hawk. Anti-racism at Black Hawk also means we work to create a culture of learning and spirit of inquiry that contributes to our staff’s joy and sense of belonging at school. We center staff voice through distributive leadership, recruitment and celebration of staff of color, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues during team planning time and our professional learning series. If we are to commit to anti-racist education, we must also prioritize family partnerships over the next three years in order to increase a positive sense of connection between school and community, seek and listen to advice from families, and accelerate academic outcomes for students. We commit to centering family and community voice and refining and improving our current engagement practices that also lift black families in support of Black Excellence. Love and joy are important in creating an inclusive school community where everyone feels they matter at school.

Some of the challenges we face center on school wide systems and the need for more academic rigor as we know our students will use their brilliance and rise to high expectations. The systems and structures designed to support our school’s culture and climate can at times clash with the beliefs of some of our staff. This dissonance can yield inconsistencies with holding students accountable during instructional and transition time. Low rigor leads to low performance on mastery of content. At times, low rigor includes not grade-level appropriate tasks or texts, emphasis on direct instruction, and an absence of higher-order thinking. We want rigor in classrooms so that students are challenged to think, grow, and perform at the highest level possible. Students must build their skills, understanding, and thinking power so that they can achieve at their maximal level. This high level of excellence requires that we make the standards clear through daily learning targets and success criteria as well as being ready for class. Knowing these challenges, we hold high expectations for our entire community, including both staff and students. Our #1 school wide expectation is “Be Ready for Class”. We are all accountable to this expectation by establishing a clear purpose for learning and how to be successful in the classroom. By building strong classroom communities through structures and routines, our students will know their learning matters. Our warm demander (“tough love”) approach makes students know they matter and also firmly pushes them to be responsible members of the Black Hawk community. Being a warm demander means that we have clear and high expectations for student academic performance. We create supportive partnerships with students by building rapport and trust, showing personal regard for students, earning the right to demand engagement and effort, showing competence with the technical side of instruction, holding high standards and offering emotional support and instructional scaffolding, and
encouraging productive struggle (Zaretta Hammond, “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain”, 2015, p. 99). We hope students view Black Hawk staff as caring because of our “tough love” stance.

Black Hawk is a unique school that prioritizes centering student voice and culture. This is accomplished through asking students what matters to them and giving them opportunities to design solutions to local issues. Our students engage in these class action research projects through the Black Hawk CARES curriculum (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self-control). Our students also express their identity, history, concerns, and passions through culturally relevant and contemporary art projects. These art projects are co-designed alongside students by asking them for input on content and expression. Hands-on inquiry and constructivist learning also lives in science classrooms and Project Lead the Way. Other classrooms write argumentative essays through slam poetry. Our annual talent show celebrates youth and hip-hop culture by showcasing dance and rapping. Black Hawk’s restorative justice club centers student voice by giving them safe spaces to share their concerns as well as the communication and advocacy skills to proactively problem solve and build relationships with one another. Hmong and Spanish literacy nights are a tradition at Black Hawk that provide opportunities for our Hmong and Spanish families to connect with the learning and language acquisition that is supporting the educational experience for these communities. These examples give us a lot to celebrate and in the next three years we hope to increase the ways we get student voice and how we use it to inform decisions for the school and changes to teaching and learning.
**Demographics**

- 27% African American
- 11% American Indian
- 19% Asian
- 11% Hispanic/Latino
- 31% Multiracial
- 31% White
- 32% English Language Learners
- 74% Low-income
- 19% Students with disabilities

**Strategic Framework Goal #1 Milestones: On-Track to Graduate**

Each bar shows the percent of students meeting the relevant metric overall and for the focus group the school selected on their School Improvement Plan (SIP) when applicable.

**MAP Reading Proficiency**
- Overall: 28%
- African American: 17%
- Special Education: 3%

**MAP Math Proficiency**
- Overall: 35%
- African American: 17%
- Special Education: 9%

**Strategic Framework Goal #3 Milestones: Positive Climate**

Each bar shows the percent of responses within each dimension that were positive overall. When no goal for the measure has been set "No Goal" will be displayed in the bar.

**I feel I belong at this school.**

- Overall: 54%
- African American: 59%
- Special Education: 52%