



## We Wear the Mask

Essay/Poster Board Contest

In commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, the Friends of King School District is sponsoring the 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Essay-Poster Board Contest for students in Pre- K through 12<sup>th</sup>. **"We Wear the Mask: The Irony of Having to Wear a Mask for Survival"** is the theme for the 2021 contest.

The poem, "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar, resonates with many since masks have become a must-have accessory. This poem is about the pain Black Americans hid under a mask of happiness during the post-Civil War era. Today, we wear physical masks to protect ourselves and each other from getting the virus. But, in the wake of the current social injustices happening in our communities, don't we also wear the mask Dunbar writes about to hide our true feelings?

Pre- K through 12th grade students can participate in several ways:

1. **Pk- 4<sup>th</sup> Grades** - Create a black history mask or use a poster board to "showcase" different black history themes.
2. **5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Grades** Write an essay on the meaning of the poem "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. (Number of words 500)
3. **9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades** Write an essay on the meaning of the poem "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. (Number of words 800)

Winners will be determined in five grade-level categories: Pre-K -1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12. A certificate and gift card will be awarded to each first-place (\$50), second place (\$30) and third place (\$20) winner in the five categories. Teachers of winning students will receive a \$25 gift card. Winners can win an extra \$10.00 if they are able to recite the poem, "We Wear the Mask."

The projects must be submitted on or before Monday, January 11, 2021.

All winning essays and posters will be displayed on our website and social media pages and published in our monthly newsletter. High school winners may elect to read their essays during a virtual assembly during our culminating activity commemorating Dr. King's birthday.