



July 12, 2020

Dear Waverly Community,

On July 2, we wrote to you about the Instagram account on which BIPOC students are posting and commenting on their experiences of racism at Waverly. In that letter, we committed to deep personal and institutional reflection and an even greater commitment to making the school's mission and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statements true for all members of our community. We pledged to do the daily, conscious work necessary to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression within our school.

We are taking the time to vigorously analyze the causes of our various failures and find the best path forward. We know that this work will be strengthened by the more collective discussion and decision making that can occur when we are reunited as a community, hopefully in person, in August and September. We commit ourselves to becoming fully responsive to the needs of all our students, with particular attention and dedication to those BIPOC students whom we have failed.

We know that we will need the help of those outside of our school who might hold up a mirror so that we can more honestly see ourselves, and thus lead us towards a more just future. We have been actively researching organizations specializing in and known for their methods and implementation of restorative justice in order to counsel and support all constituents of the Waverly community –students, parents, administration, staff, faculty– to begin the work of healing so vitally necessary. When students return to us this fall, we commit to prioritizing the healing work that needs to be done and designing a schedule and program that ensures this will happen. We commit to empowering students with restorative justice leadership training in advocacy and empathy and providing our faculty with values-based facilitation training to ensure the sustainability of these practices. We will hold space for everyone who has been harmed as well as for those who seek to make amends.

In consultation with outside experts, we will undergo a comprehensive structural assessment of our school climate and culture. All members of the community will be invited to engage in this process, in the hopes that we will delve deeply and honestly into the ways we have not yet lived up to our mission and to illuminate the path forward. We are committed to this active interrogation and ultimate dismantling of problematic systems that are currently in place.

Another step we will take right now is to thoroughly revise our incident protocols in order to consistently employ restorative justice strategies to address harms. We are working with an expert in this field to train administration in infusing trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches into our policy and process.

We are committed to supporting the mission of a student-initiated peer advocacy group whose mandate will be centering student voices in matters of reporting and resolving community conflict. We are

committed to training these students as peer counselors and sustaining their work and initiatives. We are also doing everything in our capacity to supplement our community with student support positions in a way that will serve our students now and in the future.

Now is the time to take big, bold steps towards truly embodying and fulfilling our mission. Our goal must be to create an institution that inhabits justice in every form. There is much to be done, and the steps we have outlined here are but a few of the many we need to take. As a school, we should model the processes necessary to dismantle oppressive systems, to heal, and to rebuild.

Sincerely,

Heidi Johnson
Head of School