



August 14, 2020

Dear Families,

We want to update you on the progress we've made on the steps outlined in the letter of July 12 regarding our work to create a truly just and equitable environment at The Waverly School.

This summer, the administrative team has engaged in deep personal and institutional reflection and has taken the time to vigorously analyze the causes of our various failures and find the best path forward. 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. It is our goal to create an institution that inhabits justice in every form.

We are looking forward to engaging in frequent, open, and transparent communication with all members of the community to the fullest extent possible. This is an important step as we work together towards putting a collaborative vision of our community into place.

Accountability means taking responsibility. Our first step is to work with those outside of our community who can help us engage in a meaningful self-reflection and critical self-assessment. This process has already begun.

Simultaneously, we can be responsive right now. Here are some of the action items that are in progress for this school year:

1. Working with the California Conference for Equity and Justice (CCEJ), 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, to participate in cross-sectional groups, including those with students and adults. The findings of this process will inform our ongoing work.
2. We will also work with CCEJ to empower 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.
3. We have thoroughly revised our incident protocols in order to consistently employ restorative justice strategies to address harms. We are working with Marianne Frapwell, Senior Manager and Survivor Advocate for Project S.A.F.E. at Occidental College, to train administration in infusing trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches into our policy and process. All faculty will receive instruction and professional development in trauma-informed practices.
4. We are committed to supporting the mission of Raven Advocates 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.
5. We will also be partnering with All Voices, an online platform that will allow employees and parents to anonymously provide feedback to school leadership and engage in dialogue without revealing their identities. After piloting the program with adults in the community in coming months, the school will consider its possible uses for anonymous communication between high school students and administration as well.
 6. We are creating space in the schedule for regular affinity group meetings and plan to expand affinity space offerings to ensure that all students can come together in community around the aspects of identity that are most salient for them.
 7. We have committed a portion of the high school schedule to a student-led social and emotional space, created regular social and emotional morning space, and have expanded and resourced the Wellness program in ways that support our multicultural community.
 8. We look forward to sharing more about the hiring of a counselor who will work with students in affinity space and participate in the DEI work of the school.
 9. As a part of their work to implement the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards, the elementary teaching teams have worked with Monique Marshall, a widely respected consultant on DEI and curriculum development. We have identified race, ethnicity, and immigration as the aspects of identity that elementary classes will focus on as they develop their class themes and teach the TT Social Justice Standards next year.
 10. The administration is working with many BIPOC faculty members on proposals to create stipended faculty DEI leadership positions that represent all divisions of the school.
 11. We are working with parents to create a parent DEI education committee with the goal of offering two to four parent education events next year and launching parent affinity groups for all who are interested. Parents of BIPOC students have already begun meeting this month and plan to meet on a monthly basis; they have requested that I attend these meetings moving forward and I will enthusiastically do so. We are working with AwareLA to facilitate white anti-racist work in the parent body, as well.

In order to achieve ongoing accountability and promote collaborative community involvement, we are committed to implementing the following measures. Once the parent group is established, we will call a council of the leaders of the faculty/admin DEI efforts, the chairs of the board DEI committee, the chairs of the parent DEI education committee, and student leaders of the BIPOC affinity group and the white Anti-Racist affinity group. This council will meet three to four times a year to report out on actions and progress, share resources, and provide assistance to one another. The work of this council will be shared regularly with the entire Waverly community.

There is much to be done, and the steps we have outlined here are but a few of the many we need to take.

I look forward to discussing these and other steps with you in upcoming town hall meetings, scheduled for Thursday, August 20 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, August 25 at 10:00 a.m. Please RSVP to either town hall meeting and submit your questions in advance to Meg Bradbury at meg@thewaverlyschool.org.

With hope and resolve,

Heidi Johnson
Head of School