



July 2, 2020

Dear Waverly Community,

The stories that have been shared by current students and alumni who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) on the [@thewaverlyway](#) Instagram account make clear that students have experienced harmful acts of racism in our community. The students and alumni who have posted and commented on the account have demonstrated tremendous courage. We are inspired by their actions and support them in their efforts to push the Waverly community to live up to our stated ideals. Please know that there will be no repercussions to any student posting, sharing, or amplifying the voices of BIPOC experiences at Waverly. We want to assure them that their words are encouraging 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.

For many years, we relied too heavily on our belief in ourselves as a small school with close student-teacher relationships, a commitment to encouraging students to be the best versions of themselves, and a progressive curriculum. Waverly did not have the necessary systems in place to fully support our BIPOC students and educate all members of our community about systemic racism and white supremacy. We apologize for the harms that our BIPOC students and their families suffered as a result.

While we still have much to do, we have taken several significant steps in recent years. We established DEI committees at the faculty/administration and board levels. We rewrote our mission statement to explicitly state our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and have engaged in much faculty professional development. We have established a BIPOC affinity group for high school students and have formed a white anti-racist student group to guide white students in self-reflection and anti-racist work. BIPOC faculty are meeting in affinity space and white faculty are also working together in white anti-racist affinity groups; this work is informed by stories that BIPOC students have shared in meetings with faculty and administrative members of the DEI Committee and additional anonymous written feedback that BIPOC students have provided. Curriculum and materials have been reviewed and substantially revised through the lens of DEI. The school recognizes that professional development and curriculum review are ongoing efforts and we embrace the challenge to go deeper in our work each school year.

We share these initial steps with the full understanding that we still have a great deal of work ahead of us. The [@thewaverlyway](#) Instagram is a stark and important reminder of all that still must be done. There is one specific post that is being urgently addressed due to the nature of the allegation. We are taking this matter very seriously and are actively working to resolve it. Our board of trustees has reached out to the BIPOC affinity group at the high school to request a meeting to ensure that student voices are heard and listened to at the governance level of the school. With the understanding that the school and our families need to work together to raise anti-racist children and adolescents, we are forming a parent education committee with the goal of providing DEI parent education and establishing

parent affinity spaces in the 2020-2021 school year. We recognize the need to thoroughly revise our incident protocols and to consistently employ restorative justice strategies to address harms. We are researching training for faculty and administration in the restorative justice approach. We will share more about our ongoing efforts and new initiatives in August.

We understand that the work of dismantling systemic racism requires daily conscious effort by institutions and individuals. We pledge to do that work, inspired by and for our students, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Heidi Johnson
Head of School