



October 9, 2020

Dear Families,

We are continuing our work with several partners this fall as we focus our attention on the equity and diversity work we are doing together as a school community.

We have been so fortunate to work in continued partnership with **Ismalis Nuñez and Christine Saxman**. You can learn more about Ismalis by reading about her [here](#), and more about Christine by reading about her [here](#). Ismalis and Christine have worked with faculty at all three divisions of the school, in faculty meetings and in affinity space. On October 1, Ismalis and Christine hosted a parent conversation about race, the waverly way, and COVID. In addition to their initial sessions with high school and middle school students during the first weeks of school, today Ismalis and Christine will hold space for high school students who have participated in or who are interested in participating in racial affinity space. We are fortunate to be guided by Ismalis and Christine as we move forward together as a community, and are committed to creating a sustainable partnership with these two incredible women.

Serita Young, Waverly board member and elementary school parent, is organizing the **Waverly Parent Equity and Diversity Committee**. The initial task of the committee will be to create affinity spaces for parents, as well as to hold space for multicultural dialogue. Moving forward, the parent committee will also work on parent education. Parents and families can also access the Equity and Diversity [resource page](#) on PSL.

At the elementary school, we have identified race, ethnicity, and immigration as the aspects of identity that elementary classes are focusing on as they develop their class themes and teach the **Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards** this year. As students learn about these aspects of identity they will be supported in this work through the intersectional curriculum of the wellness program, which has always engaged in identity development work through an anti-bias, anti-racist lens. At the middle school, faculty are preparing to engage with students this semester with ***This Book Is Anti-Racist***, which you can learn more about [here](#) in this excellent video with author Tiffany Jewell. Students in the 5/6 classrooms are working through this text as well, and families are encouraged to participate in this learning.

At the high school, students are engaged with equity and diversity curriculum in a variety of ways. In addition to the learning happening in their academic classrooms, students are also participating in the **Love and Justice** program's new offerings. Many of the curricular areas and approaches we have always engaged with in wellness - social justice, sexuality, healthy communication and consent, decision making, human development, body image, gender identity, psychoeducation, and many more - have a new home in the Love and Justice program. Through a social justice lens, and informed by interpersonal neurobiology, the Love and Justice program supports student understanding of self and community. The Love and Justice teaching team includes Meg Bradbury, Caitlin Dube, Amy Sloboda, and Robyn

Park, who joined Waverly this fall as a social justice and wellness teacher and counselor. The team met with high school parents and families last night for a Love and Justice Parent Information Session to share more about the program, and to discuss how parents can support students in this learning at home.

Affinity space programming is underway at the high school. The term *affinity group* is used as a bringing together of people who have an identifier in common, e.g. race, gender, religion, family status, etc. Affinity groups are for individuals who identify as members of the group and can speak to the experience of being a member of the group from the “I” perspective. Affinity groups are fully supported and encouraged by NAIS (the National Association of Independent Schools) and many of our peer schools are fully engaged in this process.

On Friday, September 25, students met by grade to discuss student-initiated clubs and affinity spaces. Via an online survey, students were asked to identify any student-initiated clubs that they might be interested in participating in. Students were also given the opportunity to express interest and ask questions about the current affinity spaces; there was also an opportunity to express interest in additional affinity spaces, including but not limited to the following identities: gender, LGBTQ+, ability and disability, religion, and ethnicity. This week, we have actively reviewed the results of the student questionnaire with the faculty, both those who have participated in affinity spaces in the past, and those who are interested in participating in the future. Interested faculty members met with Robyn this week to collaborate on facilitation and programming. We are moving forward with these spaces in the coming weeks.

Today, we will commence our work with the **California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ)**. CCEJ is excited to be in partnership with The Waverly School for the 2020-2021 School Year. CCEJ is a nonprofit organization based in Long Beach, serving Southern California. CCEJ’s mission is to eliminate bias, bigotry, and racism through education, conflict resolution, and advocacy. Since 1963, CCEJ has been working with schools, workplaces, and organizations to build a more just and united Southern California.

To begin our learning journey together, CCEJ will be hosting a Meet and Greet with Waverly faculty and staff this afternoon, October 9, from 1:00-2:30. CCEJ will also be meeting with students, alumni, and families. Following these initial Meet and Greet sessions, CCEJ will engage in a series of stakeholder focus groups with community members throughout the month of October.

CCEJ will be hosting an initial Meet and Greet with Waverly families on Wednesday, October 14 from 4:00-5:30, and will meet with high school students on October 15 from 1:00-2:30. Please see the attached flyers for more information about these Meet and Greet opportunities and for the Zoom links.

Please also take some time to complete the [Waverly Community Climate and Culture survey](#), accessible via this link. This survey offers the community an opportunity to share meaningful feedback with CCEJ.

We deeply appreciate your commitment and participation in this work.

Moving forward,

Heidi Johnson
Head of School