



A Message from the Board of Trustees

Thursday, July 2

Dear Park Community,

In Head of School Dan Paradis' recent correspondence, he was clear: the national upwelling of calls for the dismantling of systemic racism, wherever it resides, is an imperative for Park School to critically examine our practices and do more and do better in our own anti-racist work. As citizens, we must effect change of the Black experience in our nation. As a school, we must effect change in the experience of our Black students, families, alumni, and employees. As parents, friends, educators, and colleagues, we must come together as a community of strength and purpose.

At the end of June, the 2019–20 Board of Trustees was joined by the incoming 2020–21 Trustees to discuss the community call for deliberate anti-racist action at Park. Together, we add our collective voices in support of Dan's commitment, and in support of the work of the Park School administrative team, faculty, and staff as they advance Park's anti-racist practice. As Dan has shared, and we have now discussed as a full Board, Park will enter the next school year with specific actionable commitments that reflect our community's willingness to ask tough questions of ourselves, to lean into difficult conversations, and to effect change in both the short-term and in the future. These commitments will be shared with the community prior to the start of the coming school year.

In partnership with the senior administrative team, the Board has used both the Strategic Plan and the school's Diversity Action Plan to guide its work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Beyond developing Park's Statement on DEI and expanding administrative leadership to include a Director of DEI, significant progress has been made in addressing multiple cultural perspectives and social justice in curricular and co-curricular programming as well as incorporating DEI into professional development and educational opportunities for employees and volunteer leadership, including the Board. While we recognize, appreciate, and build upon the dedication of the members of Park's community across all constituencies that produced this work, we know that current and future work must continually prioritize racial justice and anti-racism. Furthermore, we acknowledge as Trustees the importance of pursuing our own anti-racist education and actions. In order to provide effective governance, we must address our own implicit biases, broaden and deepen our understanding of systemic racism, and actively partner with the school to ensure that Park lives its mission.

Recently, the Class of 2020 shared their own call to action with the community; and their voices have been joined by still more alumni, current students, parents, grandparents, faculty, and staff. Their letter, as Dan told the Board, is a gift to the school. Not only does it provide documentation of the lived experience of our Black Upper School students and their classmates, it exemplifies Park's support of our students' development into "confident questioners and responsible citizens of the world" — central to the Park School Mission. It is also a call for clear communication within our community regarding the depth and breadth of ongoing anti-racist work. Unequivocally, The Park School recognizes there is work to be done — and this work is built upon years of progress together as a community of students, parents, faculty, administrators, alumni, and trustees. The school must share its work more widely and more frequently — engaging partners, leveraging strengths, and welcoming critical assessments.

While Park will continue to address issues of equity and inclusion across the broad spectrum of the human experience, we cannot fail in this moment to address more explicitly the call for anti-racist programming and education — for our students, our faculty and staff, and for our families.

Black Lives Matter.

We, the Park School Board of Trustees 2019–20 and 2020–21, are committed to supporting and engaging in the work of racial justice and creating an anti-racist community. In our own households, we — alumni, parents, parents of alumni, and grandparents — commit to doing that work. As Trustees, we will hold the school accountable to do the work. And the school needs each of you to engage in this work now, and in the future. We will all grow and change as part of this commitment — and we will all benefit.

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