



Anti-Racism and Equity Engagement Action Plan Dwight-Englewood School 2020-2021

In 2020, it has become clear to Dwight-Englewood School that we should commit more strongly to transforming school culture so that anti-Black racism and other forms of discrimination are disrupted and eliminated. We understand that this work could have been more rigorous and effective in years past, more supportive of Black students and other students of color. We know that this work will take time and dedication, and we have been laying the groundwork for stronger action against racism.

Beginning in the 2020 - 2021 academic year, we plan to work as an entire school community on professional development and teaching and learning along with creating structures for students to have more explicit conversations about racism and discrimination with the intent to end both.

Along with a powerful Call to Action presented to school leaders from Black alumni and their allies, in the spring and summer of 2020, over 1,600 D-E parents, educators, current and former students signed a Community Letter in support of the School to redouble our efforts in equity and diversity and to affirm their willingness to unlearn bias. These are powerful and well supported documents. Both of these communications provide all of us a clear and well-articulated direction to guide our work to establish equity and inclusion at school: *even more rigorous faculty-staff professional development, more student-facing work, more parent education, and more explicit work to shift the school culture.*

Building on the School's Foundation Documents and the work done to date, with excitement and without trepidation, we are developing new plans to lead the work of anti-racism, anti-discrimination and inclusion with strong support of the D-E community.

Groundwork for Faculty Professional Development

The equity and inclusion work at D-E - among educators and other adults who work at the School and also what we intend to build for and among students - is not currently passive. It is active and activated, generating new leadership and new energy with each year that passes. For the past three years, school leaders

and employees have been required to engage independently and collectively in professional learning and growth in anti-bias education.

▲ At a 2017 - 2018 academic year Board of Trustees day-long retreat, [Dr. Gene Batiste](#), former Vice President for Equity and Justice Initiatives at the National Association of Independent Schools, presented to the Board and facilitated an all-day equity and inclusion training. A diverse group of students, teachers, and members of the senior administrative team participated in that training alongside the Board. The experiences and perspectives of students of color and teachers were shared readily with Trustees that day.

▲ In the summer of 2018, all teachers were required to read a collection of articles focused on equity and inclusion as a professional community - from an intersectional lens - to prepare them for year-long in-house equity training designed by Dr. Buggs and facilitated by members of the school wide Diversity Committee.

▲ To launch the 2018 - 2019 academic year, during all faculty-staff meetings and professional days, we welcomed nationally-known equity/diversity trainer [Rosetta Lee](#), who led us in reflection and learning about cultural competence & equity in schools. Several Board members attended Ms. Lee's presentation with faculty and staff.

▲ Flowing from the tone set by Ms. Lee, Professional Days were dedicated to equity/diversity learning among educators, designed to set the stage for ongoing work with adults who work at D-E. Topics for 2018-2019 and the fall of 2019 were:

- ▲ understanding bias (implicit and explicit)
- ▲ What does it mean to be anti-bias educators?
- ▲ what an inclusive school does and looks like

and educators worked in cross-divisional small groups on these equity and inclusion topics, and were charged with applying that learning to their practices at school.



In the summer of 2019, a sizeable group of educators read the book [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Race](#) by Robin Diangelo to prepare to launch a white ally/anti-racist faculty group and an educators of color affinity group.

■ In the 2019 - 2020 academic year:

▲ A white ally/anti-racist educator group met all year to build shared anti-racist consciousness and prepared to introduce that work to the larger faculty. This work was led by three Upper School white teachers.

▲ An educators of color affinity group met all year and began to build a space for their own development and support system, including strategizing about how to better support students of color at D-E. Note: *There is a growing critical mass of educators and staff of color working at D-E now.*

▲ The white ally/anti-racist group met with the educators of color group for a multiracial dialogue that further deepened the accountability of the white educators who are working on being anti-racist.

▲ In the spring of 2020, the white ally/anti-racist group extended an invitation to all white faculty to start a school-wide conversation about antiracism involving white people. They also began a first conversation with a group of white Upper School students.

▲ In the summer of 2020, three Middle School white teachers have joined in the leadership of this white ally/anti-racism initiative and are working with nationally-known trainer [Ali Michael](#) to deepen their toolkits. The work to expand the development of white anti-racist educators will continue across all three divisions this year, and Upper School and Middle School educators will continue to invite white students into these conversations.

▲ In summer of 2020, this group of white teachers read and discussed *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi with plans to launch further work this fall among their colleagues.

Prior to 2020, the stage had been set for regular and consistent professional development for diversity and equity among faculty and staff. The work for the 2020 - 2021 academic year will build upon the foundation of these prior years.

Professional Development Action Plan for 2020 - 2021

In light of the events in the United States in late spring of 2020 along with the Call to Action put forward to us by Black Alumni, current students and their allies, faculty-staff professional development work for the 2020 - 2021 academic year will be

explicitly focused on race, racism, discrimination and will involve educators in unlearning/undoing racism and discrimination - both subtle and overt. Dr. Buggs, D-E's Director of Equity and Diversity Engagement, is herself a professional trainer, with advanced study in social justice education and in the theory and practice of intersectionality, and she has launched the initial steps for anti-racism training of faculty-staff. Summer planning for this year's work continued even as the School prepared to re-open in the current COVID environment.

■ "In-house" Professional Development for Faculty and Staff

Before leaving for the summer, faculty and staff at D-E were given the assignment to watch one of two films focused on the system of racial inequity - from historical and present-day lenses. As a school, we will begin the upcoming year's equity professional learning with a process designed for faculty and staff to workshop the films at the beginning of the year, and to incrementally deepen the conversation throughout the entire year. The deepening of the conversation is being designed around the following goals for educators to:

- 1 have an updated and intersectional definition of racism and discrimination;
- 2 focus on the systemic workings of racism and discrimination;
- 3 examine how racism and discrimination lives in school cultures and;
- 4 adopt a set of practices to disrupt racism and discrimination at D-E.

This work will involve training and professional development as follows:

▲ Invited speakers to give our community insight into larger conversations about systemic racism and racial justice beyond our school and connected to our school

▲ Dr. Buggs will co-design, co-facilitate and/or host anti-racism workshops with her colleagues from the Center for Racial Justice in Education, Race Forward, the Race Institute for Educators, the Privilege Institute, Beyond Diversity 101, and/or the Equity Literacy Institute/Ed Change.

▲ The adult community will work all year in large and small groups, addressing many aspects of racial inequity, how it seeps into school communities, and the responsibility that educators have to foster anti-racism as foundational to a healthy school culture.

▲ The department chairs and principals read the book *Everyday [Anti-Racism: Getting Real About Race in Schools](#)* this summer and will use it as a guidepost for their leadership work among faculty members in their departments this year.

- ▲ The white ally/anti-racist educator group will design specific conversations for white people to accompany the school-wide work next year.

In addition to the required and ongoing conversations that the adult community will have at D-E, faculty and staff will also be given a range of opportunities outside of school to deepen their anti-racism toolkits. Some of these opportunities are as follows:

- ▲ The Race Institute for Educators
- ▲ Racial Equity Trainings offered by Race Forward, Niyonu Spann, Equity Literacy Institute/EdChange, the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools, the New York State Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools, and other organizations and professional trainers.
- ▲ Undoing Racism workshops by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond

All in all, faculty-staff training will indeed be focused on anti-racism and anti-discrimination and becoming anti-racist and anti-bias educators this upcoming school year and beyond.

Representation in Faculty - Hiring and Retention

- ▲ At D-E “our commitment to the diversity of our student body requires a mirror image of that diversity in the composition of faculty, staff, administration, and trustees, and will likewise be reflected in our curriculum.” Thus, hiring for diversity has become a top priority for the School. The diversity hiring process involves the following:
 - ▲ Expanded outreach beyond the customary independent school channels, i.e., posting job descriptions more widely, representing D-E at a range of careers fairs, and working with recruitment firms that focus on diversity hiring
 - ▲ The commitment of department chairs and division principals in revamping the hiring process to include multiple voices.
 - ▲ Dr. Buggs serves on nearly every teacher search committee, and she interviews every candidate who is being considered for a teaching or administrative leadership position.
 - ▲ All teacher/administrator search committees have conversations/training about unlearning bias in the hiring process.
 - ▲ All teacher and administrative searches embed meetings and conversations with students into each finalist’s process. In our inclusion of students in the finalist’s process, we will

ensure that our student diversity leaders will also be part of this process.

- ▲ Demonstrated commitment to anti-bias and multicultural education is now a qualification for all teacher positions at D-E. Candidates who bring experience and commitment to our equity and inclusion work at school now receive top priority in our searches.
- ▲ In three years, the number of faculty and staff of color working at D-E has grown exponentially in each division. Many new hires at D-E have been Black. We have also attracted Latino/a, Asian-American and Middle Eastern-descendant educators and staff. White teachers who were recently hired by D-E are committed to equity and inclusion work; some are strong participants in the white ally/anti-racist conversations the School has begun.
- ▲ We will work to hire more Black STEM teachers in the Upper School. We have made progress in hiring Black educators in the STEM fields in the Lower and Middle Schools.
- ▲ We will work to hire more Black male teachers at D-E.
- ▲ With respect to retention, the Educators of Color group now provides a space for people of color who work at D-E to coalesce and support each other. BIPoC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) teachers are a growing critical mass at D-E.

Diversity in Student Body

The School remains committed to enrolling a diverse and talented student population that reflects the diversity and talent of the region. As a founding member of New Jersey SEEDS, the School remains committed to supporting and enrolling students from New Jersey SEEDS as well as similar programs we have expanded our outreach to, such as Prep for Prep, A Better Chance, and the Oliver Scholars Program. And we recognize the need to attract diverse families even beyond these programs and the School uses when necessary, its financial aid support to enroll these students.

The School continues to enroll each year an increasingly diverse new cohort of students into its student population and as the admissions process continues to become more selective, the School is able to focus more successfully in its selection process to the most talented students from a range of regional areas - maintaining the important regional diversity that allows the School to increase its racial, ethnic, religious and other diversities important to the mission of the School.

In response to the Call to Action and the School’s commitment to build an inclusive community where all students can ‘see themselves’ in other community members, the admissions staff will this fall convene a group of former and current Black and African-

American parents, as well as key staff at D-E, to jointly strategize how we can expand our outreach to Black and African-American families.

Able to utilize our school's financial aid to meet the mission of the School, we will continue to offer financial aid to families who qualify, and we will strategize further about how financial aid can continue to help the School sustain and expand its socioeconomic and racial-ethnic diversity.

Financial Commitments (Scholarships)

Through the careful management of our school's resources, the financial aid budget, the current operating budget and a fund especially given provided to the School to support students in need, the School is able to provide not only tuition assistance for students of need, but also support for textbooks, computers, DE360 programs, and on and off campus activities. Each year the amount of funds available for such support increases through the generous donations of families supportive of this work.

Working with the Development Office, the School will initiate a new fund to which interested families can provide such support specifically for students of color in need of this additional support.

The School allocates a substantial budget for equity and diversity engagement work which supports student-facing programming. The School continues to offer additional support when requested and that includes initiatives brought forward by the US Black Affinity group and several other social identity-based groups and clubs in the Upper and Middle Schools. Funding for professional development referred to earlier has and will continue to increase as needed. This ongoing commitment is best demonstrated by the ever growing number of opportunities afforded to students, faculty, staff, members of the Board and families. Along with her work with committed D-E employees who serve on the school-wide Diversity Committee and on the Equity Leadership Team, Dr. Buggs is in conversation with Dr. De Jarnett about various models for expanding her staff over the next few years.

Student Equity and Diversity Leadership Conferences

■ NAIS' Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC)

SDLC is a national conference sponsored each year by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and is a powerful experience for Upper School students who attend. Each year 15-20 students apply, and the SDLC delegation is chosen by a subcommittee of the school's Diversity Committee. D-E sends the maximum number of students to SDLC every year (6); this number is set by NAIS. The overwhelming majority of D-E students who now

attend SDLC are students of color. In December 2020, in light of the pandemic, SDLC will be held online.

Given that the number of students we can send to SDLC is so small, over the past three years in the Upper School, we have grown an equity/diversity leadership program that offers opportunities to attend several regional equity conferences as well as to have equity and social justice dialogues at school. For example, each year students attend the Mid-Atlantic Region Diversity Conference (MARD) where attendees have historically been able to work with Dr. Rodney Glasgow, co-founder of SDLC. Students are also invited to attend the Young Men of Color Symposium, the (Re)Defining Power Conference, the New Jersey Students of Color Conference, Teens Talk About Racism, Diversity Awareness Initiative for Students Conference (DAIS), the Latinx Youth Conference, the Young Asian Leadership Alliance Gala (YALA Gala), and the Young Womxn of Strength Conference. We also offer Middle School students opportunities to attend Middle School diversity conferences.

In addition to SDLC and regional diversity conferences, two students were recently supported to attend another national conference - the Youth Action Project of the Annual White Privilege Conference. **The goal of this conference is to engage youth who are ready for learning and dialogue that is explicit about racism, white supremacy, and intersectional forms of privilege.** We are exploring whether this conference is a good one to support a larger group of students to attend each year.

In 2020-2021, a group of student equity/social justice leaders at D-E plan to launch their own regional student-led conference. They want to invite students around the region to come to D-E for a day of learning and dialogue around issues of privilege and what to do when one has it. This conference is being designed with an intersectional lens, and a diverse group of students are involved in the planning and design of this conference. It is scheduled to happen in the spring of 2021.

D-E students have been participants in the newly created New Jersey Students of Color Conference, hosted by Newark Academy and Kent Place School. This year, D-E students of color will be asked to be conference hosts.

Developing Upper School Equity Leadership, Student Anti-Racism Initiatives, and Curricular Initiatives

Starting with sending more and more cohorts of students to regional and national equity conferences for youth, D-E is formalizing an equity leadership program in the Upper School. The program is intersectional in its approach to equity and diversity work among students.

In addition to students attending conferences outside of D-E, in

2020-2021 community dialogues will be regularly offered - on topics like anti-racism, undoing sexism, “checking my privilege,” etc.- along with leadership and facilitation training. Students who elect to participate in the equity leadership program are cultivated as ambassadors for equity. We will support students to develop the tools and analysis to stand in their power, to be leaders among their peers, and to model anti-discrimination and inclusion.

We are building student equity leadership from the ground up, starting with students in younger grades while we encourage the culture changes needed for the Upper School.

■ Engaging the whole student body in the Upper School

Whole and Half Day Learning Programs

In addition to outward-facing regional and national conferences that are offered to students and the equity leadership program where self-selected students participate, there are now required whole group equity/diversity learning experiences in both the Upper and Middle Schools each year. In the fall of 2018, the Upper School designed a “Gender Equity Day”, which was a day-long conference for the entire high school. It featured [Dr. Jackson Katz](#) as the keynote speaker and engaged students in a range of small group workshops focused on various matters of gender equity, including the intersections of race and gender. (There was also a faculty professional development workshop offered by Dr. Katz that day).

In the fall of 2019, the Upper School “Connections Day” involved students in reflection about empathy and Intergroup Dialogue. Intergroup Dialogue is a methodology for talking across difference, creating a “container” for students to prepare for more challenging learning and dialogue about identity and oppression. While Connections Day was focused on social-emotional and ethical issues for young people, the equity/diversity student leaders and professionals were aware that introducing the entire Upper School to the practice of Intergroup Dialogue set the stage for more equity and diversity-based conversations - especially about race and racism - that we knew were on the horizon.

2020-2021’s Upper School whole group experiences will be designed for students at the start of the year to engage in election-related topics to prepare the community for the 2020 Presidential Election, including some that involve students in learning about issues of race and racism. After the election, conversations and days of learning that deal directly with race, racism, and learning anti-racism will be planned for the student body. Dr. Buggs will be working with the Upper School Deans, the Diversity Committee, and student leaders to design next year’s whole Upper School program.

Advisory Discussions

Upper School student equity leaders have requested that several discussions in advisory be focused on talking about race and

undoing racism. The Upper School Deans and Ms. Lisa Wittner, the Direct of Social Emotional Learning along with Dr. Buggs and Ms. Murphy will be charged in 2020-2021 with designing and planning the facilitation of these learning opportunities for the entire Upper School.

Outside Speakers and Experts

A speaker series for 2020-2021 will invite people to D-E to speak with students about racism/ anti-racism as well as critical issues leading up to the presidential election.

Engaging the whole student body in the Middle School

The Middle School, under the leadership of principal Mr. Jonathan Davis, now hosts and requires participation of all students in a yearly Diversity Day. Students involved in diversity groups in the MS - Kids of Color, GSA, Jewish Kids, and Girls in Math/STEM, affinity/safe space groups that were started in 2017 - will collaborate with teachers and division leaders to build next year’s Diversity Day. During the experience last year, Middle School students active in the Kids of Color group and the GSA designed and led workshops on microaggressions and being an ally among their peers.

In addition to what is now an annual Diversity Day, Middle School teachers plan to hold teach-in days to focus students in talking explicitly about racism and anti-racism.

New Curricular Initiatives

■ Middle School

In the spring of 2020, the 8th grade history teachers decided to assign [Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You](#) by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi (the young adult version of a combined [Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#) and [How to Be An Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi) as a core part of their entire grade’s curriculum for 2020-2021. This book, which will be a part of the 8th grade history curriculum, will prepare all 8th graders who continue at D-E for 9th grade to enter Upper School having already had key curricular discussions about race and anti-racism before they begin high school.

■ Upper School

The 9th grade seminar is now required for all entering high school students. This class, is an equity-based seminar designed to build student literacy in issues of identity, power, and discrimination, including race, class, gender, etc. The seminar teachers worked over the summer to consider shifting the curriculum to have all 9th

graders talk about race and racism early in the first semester rather than later as they have been doing.

■ Lower School

In 2020-2021 Lower School teachers will be leaning into a curriculum exploration/revision project to look at how social studies is taught across the division. Already teachers have identified the desire to incorporate more explicit work around matters of race-ethnicity-culture, affirming diversity, and fostering equity and have been working to add new units and foci to their work with children.

■ School-wide

We are planning school-wide programming for racial and identity-based literacy as a student-facing educational project. This work is being designed by educators - Dr. Buggs, teachers, deans, the new history department chair, Dr. Easley-Houser, and the principals - with attention to both academic and equity-based social-emotional learning for young people. Our plan for the work with students can empower an already vibrant and active cadre of student equity/diversity leaders, as well as educate all students about how to be upstanders and disruptors of racial and other identity-based bias. In 2020-21 we will be studying the [Pollyanna Racial Literacy Curriculum](#) for grades K-8 with the intent to adopt a racial literacy curriculum suitable for D-E.

We also have started the process of working with restorative justice models through the convening of a restorative justice taskforce of teachers across all three divisions. Our intent is to work with the intersections of restorative justice and racial equity as a major project of school culture-building.

In 2020-21, Dr. Buggs plans to work with the Diversity Committee, the educators of color group, division Deans and principals to devise a process for reporting bias-related incidents to address racial bias and racist incidents that happen at D-E.

A Future Climate Assessment

The School finished its re-accreditation process in 2019-2020. Now, our attention can turn to planning for a climate assessment for the School. Several people at D-E have educational research experience. Dr. Buggs has experience overseeing the AIM climate assessment process from her work prior to coming to D-E. AIM is one of many climate assessment instruments that we will examine and make decisions around this year. We also have the opportunity to have a climate survey designed for us by researchers and scholars; this may be a good option for D-E given its context and goals. Alumni, parents, current students, employees, and the Board of Trustees will certainly be invited to participate in any upcoming climate study.

Black and BIPOC Alumni Network and Outreach

Dr. Buggs and Ms. Debbie Rivera Murphy '11, D-E's Upper School director of student activities and community service, started together as employees in 2017. They have been working on bringing alums of color back to campus and connecting them with students and adults of color, as well as with the school overall. In 2018, they supported the Black Affinity Group to host a dinner and dialogue with Black alumni, and they hosted the school's first Alumni of Color Reception during Alumni Weekend. In 2019, the Alumni of Color Reception brought more alums to campus for a rich discussion with D-E adults and current students. 2020's plans to host that reception were disrupted by the pandemic. These two educators of color plan to grow this network, to collaborate with the advancement office, to bridge to alumni of color, connect them with current students and leaders of student affinity groups (Black, Latinx, and Asian), with adults of color who work at D-E, and with the parent affinity groups (Black, Latino/a, Chinese, Korean, South Asian, and Asian-American parent affinity groups are active at D-E).

We want to have Black alumni feel more connected with D-E, to be abreast of the school-wide equity and diversity work that is underway, and to come back to campus for events that Ms. Murphy and Dr. Buggs co-host with the Office of Alumni Relations and Giving. Even with limitations that may be in place in light of the pandemic, virtual events - if in-person events are impossible - will be planned for 2020-2021.

In collaboration with the School's Alumni Relations Council (ARC) and staff, we will foster career networking for all students paying particular attention to developing strong connections between our current students of color with our college-aged alumni of color and our professional alumni of color. Additionally, we will form a new Alumni of Color subcommittee of ARC to keep our alumni of color updated and involved with all that is going on in and out of our school community.

Head of School Ten (10) Year Institutional Diversity Planning

The next step in the School's ongoing accreditation is to follow-up on our recent decennial Self-Study and Visiting Team Report with a 10-year action plan to address all recommendations developed in our Self-Study and included in the Visiting Team Report. This 10-year action plan also holds responsibility that we are deliberate in our work to honor all accommodations found in both reports. Recommended in our Self-Study and encouraged by the Call to Action as well as supported by our community, the School's ten-year action plan will include a 10-year strategic plan for the School to remain committed to diversity, builds on previous work to end racism and discrimination at the School, provides an inclusive community and program for all members and develops a sense

of belonging for everyone. This plan will be informed by not only the recently completed re-accreditation process, the Alumni Call to Action, data from an upcoming school climate study, but also from the best practices and current research on diversity, inclusion, equity, and restorative justice.

In closing

We have learned that the work for “diversity” needs to be rooted in equity, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and creating an inclusive school culture more free of bias overall. We see that the work grows from all directions, from school leaders who affirm and support the work, from teachers who lean into professional development and expand their curricula, from students of all ages who are being offered more opportunities to learn and lead for equity and diversity, from parents who entrust us to nurture their children well, and from alumni who insist that we face our history and improve the experience for Black/BIPoc students at D-E going forward.