



ST. GEORGE'S
SCHOOL

“St. George's has given me the chance to be surrounded by different cultures and meet great friends from all around the world.”

—Tharaly Joseph '22

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives

St. George's is committed to preparing students to live in a diverse world, one where all students will increasingly need the cultural competency necessary to interact with people from a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Some of our programming in this area is special and specific — taking the form of events and programs. We are also committed to examining all aspects of our work with students to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible.

While by no means complete, the following list gives a flavor of some of our work in this area:

Student Programming

Every year students are exposed to a wide variety of special speakers and guests offering different viewpoints and perspectives on the human experience. From spoken-word performances to theatrical productions and guest presentations, these programming efforts often include a Q&A session or are followed by small-group discussions, allowing students the opportunity to question and to reflect.

From 2006-2014, Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Kim Bullock organized and oversaw our multicultural curriculum and workshops, an annual requirement for all of our students. With the introduction of our Community Life Program in 2014, Dr. Bullock has developed and led the diversity portion of that curriculum, during which students develop a common language around race, gender and other areas of diversity, and then gain experience and understanding in a variety of topics including the history of social justice, unearned privilege, media literacy, and implicit bias, with an eye towards developing in all of our students the leadership skills necessary to make a difference. The overall goals of the workshops are to promote respect and to value the identities, space, ideas and histories of all individuals and to promote a safe and welcoming environment.

St. George's has also provided SAFEZONE training — LGBTQ+ awareness and ally training curriculum — for faculty and students since 2015.

In 2018, St. George's was awarded a grant from the George Arents Jr. Cerimon Fund for diversity, equity and inclusion programming we called “The Beloved Community Initiative.”

The program brought a number of special speakers to campus to educate students on the history of integration at St. George's, the role African Americans played in the early history of Newport, religious freedom and gender equity. The program, which will continue in 2019-20, seeks "to move St. George's closer to what Dr. King described as the 'Beloved Community,' characterized by compassion, kindness, mutual understanding, and respect for the dignity of every human being," according to School Chaplain the Rev. Dr. Jackie Kirby.

On Feb. 25, 2019, director André Robert Lee visited St. George's to show and speak to students about his film, "The Prep School Negro." The documentary recounts his time as a student at a Pennsylvania private school and the challenges he faced both at school and at home.

Faculty Leadership and Professional Development

In 2001, the school's Multicultural Council, a faculty leadership group, was formed to oversee efforts in this realm. The group was recently renamed the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. Its purpose is to promote sustained, institutional commitment to the school's practices and policies of diversity, equity and inclusion. This committee wrote and led the adoption of the school's Diversity Vision Statement in 2009.

Each year, our faculty members are required to participate in significant training in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This begins with a comprehensive training module for all new faculty members that happens during our orientation program. After that, at least one full in-service day is devoted to this topic each year, ensuring that all faculty are given the opportunity to grow their knowledge and experience. Over the years, topics discussed have included implicit bias and institutional racism. During opening faculty meetings in 2018, our guest speaker was Vivian Wu Wong, chair of the history and social sciences department at Milton Academy. Ms. Wong spoke about "The Myth of the Model Minority" and the history and experiences of Asian and Asian-American students in America. In January 2019, former chair of the SG English Department Alex Myers, a member of the transgender community and now English instructor at Exeter, spoke to the St. George's faculty about his school's efforts to create an inclusive environment for students of all genders.

We also have an ongoing book club that meets regularly to discuss books and articles that are meaningful in this area. Recent books have included "A Burst of Light: and Other Essays" by Audre Lorde and "Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People" by Mahzarian R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald.

In Head of School Alixe Callen's first speech to faculty and staff in the fall of 2017, she implored the entire adult community to commit to their own growth in this area, undertaking conversation, reading, and professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge. There is an understanding amongst our faculty and staff that personal growth in this area is a non-negotiable aspect of their work as educators.

All members of the faculty were required to read at least one of the following books in the summer of 2019:

- "The Privileged Poor" by Tony Jack

- “White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism” by Robin DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson
- “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Strategies for Facilitating Conversations on Race” by Caprice Hollins and Ilsa Govan

Board of Trustees

The school could not do the work that it does in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion without the ongoing support of the Board of Trustees. St. George’s is one of very few schools with a specific board committee — the Diversity and Inclusion Committee — devoted to these issues. In addition, a full board training in the area of diversity and inclusion took place in the winter of 2019. The board’s facilitator for the day was Dr. Janet Reid, founder of BRBS World, a private global management consulting consortium located in Cincinnati that “works with companies to develop and retain world-class leaders who value diversity and inclusion.”

Admission

Since the late 1960s when Head of School Archer Harman led the integration of our campus, the school has been committed to expanding the number of students of color. That work continues, with the admission office once again committing to increase our population of students of color for the 2020-2021 school year. As the school markets itself to prospective families, careful attention is paid to portraying our inclusive and welcoming community. Some representative text from a recent poster produced for admission fairs: *“The strength of our community lies in our various backgrounds and life experiences. You’ll find a second home here, but that doesn’t mean leaving your culture or what matters to you behind. We want you to bring a part of your home to us. A diverse and inclusive community helps us all grow, expand our minds, and refine our values.”*

Financial Aid

Cultivating a socioeconomically diverse student body is one of our highest priorities as an educational institution. Reflecting those efforts, we have increased our financial aid budget by the equivalent of at least one full boarding tuition nearly every year for the past 20 years. Our aid budget for the 2019-2020 academic year is just over \$5 million.

Annual MLK Day Celebration

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated every year at St. George’s in a special way, thanks to Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Kim Bullock, who created and who plans our chapel service every year. Alumni of Color are our guest speakers, students of color perform readings, and student musicians and singers perform songs honoring Dr. King’s legacy. Recent speakers have included educators Adam Choice ’06 and Kinyette Henderson ’10, as well as board member Rudy Bethea ’87.

Chapel Programming

Our chapel has a long history of talks and sermons dealing with the topic of social justice. In fact, racial discrimination is a topic that has been preached about since the 1950s. Since

then, in keeping with the school's Episcopal foundation, there have been a number of talks, readings, and hymns that recognize our students' wide variety of experiences.

Sandy Restrepo '01, now an immigration attorney outside Seattle, was the 2019 recipient of the school's highest alumni honor, the John B. Diman Award. She accepted the award during a chapel service on May 18. Ms. Restrepo received an exuberant round of applause when she noted she was the first Latina to win the award, and she concluded her talk with a request to today's students: "Let us work together to build a better world for us and for our children and for everyone on this planet."

Alumni Conferences

St. George's has held Alumni of Color Conferences in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013, featuring speakers such as Cornel West, Tim Wise, and Lorene Cary. In 2018, the conference was re-crafted and renamed "A Weekend for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion" (April 20-21, 2018), and featured keynote speaker Derrell Bradford, executive vice president of 50CAN, whose goal is "a high-quality education for all children, regardless of address." Another "Weekend for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is being planned for the spring of 2020.

In 2013, our Alumni of Color Conference was dedicated to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of integration at St. George's. Speakers included Sylvester Monroe '69, author of "Brothers: Black and Poor — A True Story of Courage and Survival," and the Rt. Rev. Hays Rockwell, former St. George's chaplain and author of "Steal Away, Steal Away Home." Also in recognition of the 50th anniversary, The Conrad Young Prize, named in honor of St. George's first black student, was established and is now awarded annually "to a member of the fifth form who has contributed significantly to the school's efforts to become a more diverse respectful community through scholarship, leadership and character."

St. George's also hosted an LGBT Alumni conference in 2009. When asked why this gathering was so important, then Head of School Eric Peterson explained, "Agreeing to hold the LGBT conference is fundamentally an extension of the same spirit of inclusion that informed St. George's commitment to offering financial aid to needy students, admitting students of color, and enrolling girls. Each of those changes challenged the status quo of its time, and each resulted in outspoken and sometimes virulent resistance. In the end however, each of those efforts at inclusion strengthened, rather than weakened, our school."

Student Conferences

St. George's has a long history of engaging with our peer schools in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Kim Bullock has attended and been a valued attendee and leader of the NAIS People of Color Conference for the last 20 years. St. George's students have traveled with her many times to attend the accompanying Student Diversity Leadership Conference. Head of School Alixe Callen, Assistant Head of School for Student Life Mervan Osborne '86 and trustee Rudy Bethea '87 have also attended this conference with faculty and students.

St. George's was the host of the AISNE High School Students of Color Conference in 2005 and 2011. Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Kim Bullock has taken SG students to this annual conference since 1998.

St. George's students organized the SG Spectrum and Allies Conference for Independent Schools in 2015, featuring keynote speaker Alex Myers, former chair of the St. George's English Department, a member of the transgender community, and author of "Revolutionary," a fictionalization of the true story of Massachusetts-born Deborah Sampson, a woman who disguised herself as a man in order to enlist and fight in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

St. George's hosted the Asian American Footsteps Conference for Asian and Asian American students in 2016. Faculty members have taken SG students to this conference since 2012.

And St. George's participated in the Independent School Gender Project — a survey to help understand student experiences around gender in independent schools — in 2005 and in 2008. This survey served to empower and advance the school's dialogue around gender.