

THE NUEVA SCHOOL

Reaffirmation of Our Anti-Racist Commitment

August 26, 2020

Dear Beloved Community,

We ended the school year after George Floyd's killing with a pledge to make our community part of the solution, to support our Black colleagues, families, and students, and to build our Beloved Community. Tragically, we begin the year in the wake of the shooting of Jacob Blake this past Sunday. There are no words to describe this moment and many that come to mind: inconsolable, unconscionable, unbearable, weighty, and weary. These are truly difficult times to live through and we want to acknowledge the weight of this moment, borne more heavily by some of us than others. And while this differing impact is true, it falls on all of us to reaffirm our commitment to uphold the dignity, worth, and full humanity of every member of our community and to ensure that we all have the opportunity and the support to thrive.

We started this school year with a call to not only envision but embody the Beloved Community in our actions, relationships, curriculum, and classrooms. Jacob Blake's shooting reminds us, yet again, that this work is neither theoretical nor fleeting but rather the collective, intentional, and necessary path we must take to build a community that holds the well-being of its most vulnerable at its core. We have much healing, dialogue, and restorative work before us as we grapple with needs that have been unmet and harm that has been unacknowledged. We know we have so much more to learn and to unlearn, and as educators we must remain hopeful in our capacity to transform and grow as individuals and as an institution.

Some of you have rightly asked what, beyond our words, have we done to make good on our pledge from last June. The answer is so much and not enough—a statement that captures the magnitude and the complexity of the task before us. We are grateful that so many teachers heard the call to action and spent countless hours this summer engaging in professional learning experiences and applying an anti-bias and anti-racist lens to their curriculum. This is particularly true for the LS faculty, whose work with our youngest learners will surely ripple outwards through the whole school. We intentionally launched the school year at our August retreat with a focus on building the Beloved Community and reflecting on the summer



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reading and its application to our own racial justice work. In the midst of remote learning, we've seen our staff's extraordinary efforts to ensure that all of our students are equitably equipped with the materials and technology they need to succeed while also literally moving buildings and creating new systems to plan for their safety and well-being upon their return. During the summer, we began to listen deeply to the needs and demands of our Black community as we are focusing our attention on further developing anti-racist structures and practices in our strategic plan supported by our newly formed taskforce.

This week, as we enter into the new school year intent on making meaningful connections with our students and building learning communities, we are acknowledging Jacob Blake and our continued commitment to racial justice on Thursday in Middle School grade level meetings and on Friday in the Upper School assembly featuring youth activist, Kenan Moos. Although these gatherings are responsive to this moment, they are also part of our ongoing work to examine and engage with our nation's racial history and present moment.

Thank you for continuing to engage in this difficult but necessary work. In the face of a pandemic, fires, and continued racial inequity and violence, our work together as a community becomes even more vital, as we seek new ways to challenge old systems and create a more equitable world.

In community,

Lee, Terry, Elizabeth, Megan, Karen, Liza, Taryn, Gavin, Joe, Antonia, Alegria
(The Nueva School Leadership Team & Director of Social Justice and Equity)

