



DIVERSITY NEWS AT PCDS

9/4/2020

DEI is prioritized as a central pillar in the 2020 five-year Strategic Plan. Work has already begun to create a Diversity Mission Statement led by Jenny Treadway, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Constance Perez, Director of College Counseling. Representatives from a wide array of PCDS constituent groups are participating in this instructive and energizing opportunity. The focus will be on:

- making PCDS accessible to a broader array of students;
- amplifying student service experiences to enable more engagement beyond our campus;
- developing and funding student experiences that teach self-awareness and compassion and expand perspectives;
- engaging outside speakers to expose students to diverse voices and viewpoints;
- providing faculty and staff with professional training and resources to better deal with challenging conversations and implicit biases; and
- redoubling our efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, administrators, and board members.

We welcome your participation in creating this plan. If you are interested in helping with the planning of the five-year plan, please contact Jenny Treadway at jenny.treadway@pcds.org or Constance Perez at constance.perez@pcds.org

Through the recent implementation of faculty, student, and alumni discussion roundtables, we can speak our truth about our thoughts and feelings about DEI work. A recent faculty and staff roundtable discussion allowed the 67 participants to express their ideas and suggestions to questions like “what ideas and suggestions do you have to promote anti-racism efforts at school?” and “what obstacles need to be overcome from the past and present for these suggestions to move to action?” Similar roundtable discussions were held for Upper School Students and Alumni. This is a small step toward our ultimate goal of making PCDS an equitable place for all of our constituents.

We realize that we need to listen to those community members whose voices have been marginalized. Recently, we began to speak to a small group Alumni of Color that reached out to us to listen to their school experiences. This core group will help us with our strategic plan as well as guiding our future plans for our BIPOC community. We are continuing to have these discussions and getting their ideas and suggestions on making our curriculum and programming a safe space for all.

Our students and faculty have had the opportunity to hear speakers of different races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and socioeconomic status. In 2019-2020 Middle and Upper School students had the opportunity to hear these voices: Sajjad Shah, author of “Muslims of the World”; Carl Wilkins, who spoke on the Rwanda genocide; Violins of Hope, who played and told stories of these instruments from the Holocaust; Tuskegee Airmen; disability speakers teacher, Andrea Avery on living with arthritis, and amputee, Kainoa Spenser; Erik Weihnmeyer a blind adventurer, author, and teacher; a Buddhist Monk and a Jewish Rabbi; and an Upper School student speaker on being Native American at PCDS.

During the 2019-2020 year, our Middle School had three Community Connection Days. They performed community service at a Native American nursing home, Children’s First Academy School for homeless youth, Somalian Refugee Council, and St. Vincent de Paul.

In addition to Jenny Treadway and Constance Perez there is a nine-person DEI Coordinator team with representatives from all three divisions and staff. This team meets monthly and plans and helps with student programming and teacher training. They also serve as a resource for the divisions and personnel.

In December of 2019, six students attended the NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference in Seattle Washington. They were accompanied by eight faculty members who attended the People of Color Conference.

We are currently working on training for students, faculty, leadership, and board members to have a common vocabulary and the scaffolding to have conversations without blame or shame. With this knowledge, we will be more comfortable having the real, honest discussions that we need to have to move forward in this work. All school staff will have the training, support, and resources to nurture, encourage, and respond to all students' needs.