



A PLAN FOR ACTION

BECOMING AN **ANTI-RACIST** SCHOOL

THIS IS A TIME OF RECKONING. The murders of Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and too many others serve as a catalyst, pushing each of us to do all that we can to end systemic racism.

This movement includes Kent Denver School. We acknowledge and apologize for the painful experiences that many Black, Indigenous and people of color have had on our campus. From microaggressions in the classroom to overtly racist statements and actions by peers, parents, faculty, and staff, we have fallen short in our commitment to create a learning environment where every student—and every member of our community—feels like they belong. Change is long overdue, and we promise to do better.

Let us be clear: Racism has no place at Kent Denver and will no longer be tolerated. Dismantling systemic racism first requires understanding systems of oppression and power, followed by strategic anti-racist action—taking an uncompromising look at our curriculum, our policies and ourselves and making immediate change and commitment to ongoing action to truly fulfil our vision to build a caring, diverse community of responsible citizens.

This plan is a major step in that process. It proposes a set of concrete actions that will guide our efforts to center diversity, equity and inclusion at Kent Denver School. This work is vital, not only for students who identify as people of color, but for all students, parents, faculty, and staff, who must be prepared to engage in difficult conversations, intentionally embrace difference and understand the value of diverse, equitable and inclusive communities.

Although this plan provides direction for the next 12 months, the work to create an anti-racist school culture starts today and will continue as part of our Board of Trustees agenda for long-term change at the school. This is not the work just of our faculty, staff and students of color. It will require the ongoing commitment and participation of our entire community—shaping our strategic direction, holding us accountable, and doing the hard work of listening generously, learning critically and growing courageously.

Ultimately, we aim to be not just an anti-racist school, but a school where equity is championed for students of all identities.

OUR MISSION

Transforming lives of students and community through extraordinary educational experiences.

OUR VISION

Excellence in scholarship and character is the goal of a Kent Denver education. We seek to build a caring, diverse community of responsible citizens. To that end, our school provides a challenging college preparatory curriculum and sets high ethical standards.

OUR *PROMISE*

Kent Denver School will foster a culture where all differences and identities across gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and economic background are valued, celebrated and recognized as an essential quality of the education offered in our dynamic learning environment.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The evolving vocabulary of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work will be unfamiliar to some people, and misunderstandings are common. For us to move forward together, we must share an understanding of some foundational terms. The following definitions provide a place to start.

ANTI-RACISM is the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic and social life. (Racial Equity Tools Glossary)

DISCRIMINATION is the unequal treatment of individuals based on their identity, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, social class or immigration status. (Racial Equity Tools Glossary and National Education Association)

DIVERSITY describes the ways that people are alike and unlike, across dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, social class and immigration status. (National Education Association)

EQUITY ensures that every student has the tools and support they need to succeed, given their individual identity and circumstances, whereas equality provides equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of individual identity and circumstances. (National Association for Multicultural Education)

INCLUSION is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM (or SYSTEMIC RACISM) describes the policies and procedures of institutions such as schools that result in unequal treatment of particular groups based on race. (Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2010)

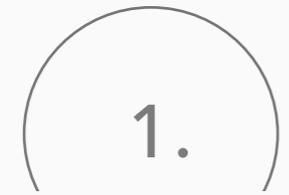
RACE and racial categorization were created to support the view that some groups of people are superior and some are inferior. Race is a social construct, not a biological fact. Race designations and the way racial categorizations are enforced have changed over time. (Racial Equity Tools Glossary)

RACISM spans race-based prejudice and institutional power, systems of advantage or oppression based on race, and white supremacist systems. It involves one group with the power to carry out systematic, race-based discrimination through institutional policies and social practices and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support racist policies and practices. Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. (Racial Equity Tools Glossary)

WHITE SUPREMACY is a political, economic and cultural system in which White people overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings, including education and the justice system. (Gillborn, *Rethinking White Supremacy: Who Counts in 'Whiteworld,'* 2006)

OUR **ACTION** PLAN

Our action plan encompasses empathy building, critical review, concrete change, and accountability in three core areas that together will create a more caring and compassionate Kent Denver School.



PRINCIPLES

Shaping Policies,
Procedures & Practices



COMMUNITY

Shaping Character
& Culture



CURRICULUM

Shaping What & How
We Teach

1. PRINCIPLES

Shaping Policies, Procedures & Practices

ACTION STEPS

STARTS NOW

- Create a Board of Trustees DEI committee who will be accountable for the successful completion of this plan and other initiatives at the Board level
- Create a faculty and staff DEI committee to work with the Director of Equity and Community Engagement to implement the action steps necessary for the successful completion of this plan
- Adopt and operationalize Kent Denver School Position Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (see Page 9)
- Create a system of measurement and accountability for the full implementation of this plan
- Conduct annual Board of Trustees DEI training

Transforming governance to center diversity, equity and inclusion requires that all of our school leaders understand how systems of power and privilege influence individual and collective decisions and policymaking. Our leaders must model the understanding and anti-racist behavior we wish to see school wide. Ultimately, these leaders are accountable for delivering our mission in alignment with our core values.

IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

- Ensure that Board of Trustee demographics better represent the diversity of the school
- Include DEI as a core component in the school's strategic plan
- Add anti-racist and anti-bias statement to the Family Handbook
- Audit DEI policy and practice in all non-academic departments—including athletics, technology, libraries, wellness, communications, admissions, development, student life and Parents' Association—and create an action plan based on audit results
- Using a DEI lens, critically evaluate partnerships/relationships with the Cherry Hills Village Police Department and other external organizations, vendors and agencies
- Add the Office of Equity and Community Engagement to the rotation of departments that receive outside, professional review from experts in the DEI field
- Review job descriptions, duties and staffing in the Office of Equity and Community Engagement
- Create a new budget line item to support DEI-related professional development for faculty and staff

2. COMMUNITY

Shaping Character & Culture

To create an anti-racist culture and a diverse community that respects the dignity of each individual and shares a sense of responsibility for the well-being of one another, we must first understand privilege and confront overt and hidden biases in ourselves, others, our school, institutions and systems..

ACTION STEPS

STARTS **NOW**

- Administer the National Association of Independent Schools Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism to collect measurable data and feedback from multiple constituencies to evaluate DEI progress and set goals for improvement
- Communicate our commitment to and actions in DEI work with families and alumni to create public accountability for our efforts
- Collaborate with student leadership to create community-wide norms and expectations with civil discourse and accountability as central themes
- Create an affinity group for faculty and staff of color to provide additional support and create a space for those teachers and staff to share their thoughts and concerns
- Create an advocacy group for white faculty and staff who want to engage more actively in DEI work and training
- Create a hiring dashboard to evaluate the school's hiring process and success in recruiting, selecting and retaining candidates of color

IN THE NEXT **12 MONTHS**

- Begin required annual anti-bias, anti-discrimination and anti-racist training for all students
- Provide students of color safe space to process and share
- Create an affinity group to extend training and support for white students who would like to engage more actively in DEI work
- Engage in an ongoing review of Kent Denver traditions, student programs, and celebrations for cultural competency and equity
- Improve recruitment efforts for families of color, investigating community partnerships and improved transportation to campus
- Begin required annual DEI training for administrators
- Create and fund a faculty and staff diversity recruitment, selection and retention plan to increase success in hiring and retaining faculty and staff members of color
- Engage a diversity hiring firm to help recruit candidates of color

3. CURRICULUM

Shaping What &
How We Teach

ACTION STEPS

STARTS **NOW**

- Audit how well our curriculum reflects diverse opinions, peoples and perspectives and create an action plan based on audit results
- Faculty and staff members set at least one DEI-related performance goal each year with accountability from their department chair

Because what we teach tells us who matters and what is worth learning, it is essential that our pedagogy reflects diverse perspectives and that anti-racism, cultural competency and the contributions of diverse peoples are embedded deeply in the curriculum across all disciplines. To prepare students to engage in critical conversations around race and culture and work across difference to create solutions, faculty and staff must be skilled DEI facilitators.

IN THE NEXT **12 MONTHS**

- Engage discipline-specific trainers where needed to incorporate DEI into our curriculum
- Create opportunities to share student learning and reflection with other members of the school community
- Provide ongoing, systematic training and support for faculty and staff to engage in anti-racist dialogue and education:
 - Summer reading and discussion
 - Direct instruction during August faculty meetings
 - Mandatory training through Professional Learning Communities
 - A full day of facilitated training each February during an in-service day
- Create and add DEI-specific standards and competencies to current job descriptions for administrators, faculty and staff
- Director of Equity and Community Engagement will serve on the evaluation team for teachers applying for advancement

POSITION STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Kent Denver School will foster a culture where all differences and identities across gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and economic background are valued, celebrated and recognized as an essential quality of the education offered in our dynamic learning environment.

APPROACH

Our approach to this work is threefold:

- We ask our community to arrive with an empathy and equity forward perspective, to get curious and to understand that discomfort is a catalyst for growth and change.
- We believe empathy-building is a scholarly endeavor and that inclusion and cultural competency should be the topic of purposeful, continuous dialogue among all members of the community.
- To create a community based on respect for the dignity of each individual and a shared sense of responsibility for the well-being of one another, we must seek to understand privilege and confront overt and hidden biases in ourselves, others, our school, institutions and systems.

COMMUNITY

Kent Denver School actively seeks students, families, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. Diversity stimulates new ways of thinking, enhances creativity, promotes better problem-solving, strengthens student outcomes, and better prepares students to live, work, contribute and thrive in a complex world. Faculty and staff should mirror the diversity in the student body and model the qualities of inclusivity.

CURRICULUM

What we teach tells us who matters and what is worth learning. Therefore, it is essential that our curriculum and pedagogy reflect diverse perspectives and that cultural competency is embedded deeply in the curriculum. By doing so, our students will learn how to engage with different perspectives, think critically and develop solutions by connecting with others to bring out the collective best—skills that will serve them well in college and beyond.

Embracing diverse perspectives strengthens our school culture and educational programs and bolsters students' ability to identify, analyze and act on issues of equality, justice and inclusion. We take seriously our responsibility to provide the academic and social-emotional skills necessary for students to successfully engage in a culturally diverse world.

"We ask our students to **lean into discomfort** as they tackle difficult topics such as calculus and physics. Talking about racism and diversity, equity and inclusion is tough, too. As faculty, staff and administrators, we need to **embrace the hard work ourselves—recognize our biases, challenge stereotypes, acknowledge weaknesses and strive to do better.**"

—Jason Mundy, *Director of Equity and Community Engagement*

WILL YOU BE PART OF THE CHANGE?

HELP US CREATE AN ANTI-RACIST CULTURE AT KENT DENVER SCHOOL.

Learn more, provide feedback and get involved:

kentdenver.org/DEI



YES!

Do Black lives matter?
Yes, Black lives matter.

Do Black lives matter at Kent Denver School?
Yes, Black lives matter at Kent Denver School.

Have we really listened to accounts of racism at Kent Denver and calls for the school to change?
YES, feedback is crucial to our efforts to transform Kent Denver into an anti-racist school.