



Magnificat High School Listening Sessions Summary

ABOUT THE LISTENING SESSIONS

Magnificat High School engaged Equius Group, LLC to conduct listening sessions with faculty, staff, students, parents, alumnae, and friends following a racist social media incident involving several students that occurred in January of 2020 and became widely known in May, 2020.

Magnificat embarked upon this process in an effort to address the concerns of the community and to better understand the current state as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition to conducting the listening sessions, Magnificat leadership has committed to forming an Anti-Racism Advisory Taskforce. A link to the full version of the Listening Sessions report can be found on our website.

RESPONDENTS

In total, **170 members of the Magnificat community engaged in the listening sessions.**

15

Parents

15

Students

45

Faculty/Staff
Members

20

Board/
Leadership
Team
Members

75

Alumnae/
Friends

THEMES

The following themes emerged from the listening session conversations across constituent groups and were compiled by Erica Merritt of Equius Group:

- The video was racist, hurtful, and should not have happened; however, many were not surprised that it happened.
- There is a lot of work to be done as a community to meaningfully increase cross-racial interaction among students inside and outside of school.
- Magnificat needs to emphasize recruiting more faculty, staff, counselors, and board members of color, and they need to be trained to teach in ways that do not reinforce stereotypes or harm students.
- The curriculum needs to include racial equity and inclusion in every subject, not just in certain classes or at certain times of the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerged from the listening session conversations across constituent groups and were compiled by Erica Merritt of Equius Group:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy for increasing the number of faculty and staff of color. Prioritize equity competency in all hiring.
- Develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for increasing and maintaining students of color.
- Capitalize on current process of updating the curriculum to increase the focus on authors of color, decolonizing history, and increasing the offerings of classes and content that expose students at all grade levels to issues of social justice.
- Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into professional development on an ongoing basis.
- Find additional ways to engage parents around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.
- Develop a communications strategy and process for handling incidents like the racist video.
- Create additional opportunities to gain input from students, particularly BIPOC students, around their experience.
- Disaggregate discipline, enrollment, disenrollment, academic placement, and other data by race to uncover and address inequities.
- Review the student handbook and employee handbook through an equity lens and make changes accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The Listening Sessions focused on reaction and response to the widely shared video created by a Magnificat student, of a Magnificat student, using a racial slur. The video was shared widely at the beginning of a summer marked by an outpouring of protests across the country, and the world, calling for an end to the systems and structures that perpetuate the injustice of racism in all of its manifestations across the generations.

We are grateful to all who participated in the Listening Sessions. We recognize and embrace the opportunities for growth and healing that reside in the aftermath of the incident, amidst the pain, frustration, and disappointment caused by the video.

In alignment with our school Mission, with humility, and in the spirit of Mary's *Magnificat*, we affirm and renew our commitment to the work of equity, inclusion, and racial justice within our school community and the larger world.

As part of that ongoing work, an Anti-Racism Advisory Task Force is being formed, and will begin its work in January of 2021. The search for the new Senior Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is underway.