



PURNELL SCHOOL

Anti-Racism & Purnell School: A Plan for Action Through Leadership, Accountability & Engagement

August 2020

Across our country, we are witnessing a movement to bring long-overdue justice to Black, Indigenous, and other people of Color. At Purnell, we are encouraged that the duration, scale, geographic distribution, and involvement of advocates of all racial and ethnic backgrounds signal real change. This is an historic moment that provides an opportunity for all institutions - educational, corporate, and legislative - to enact change that will begin to rectify the systemic racism that has existed throughout our country's history.

Purnell recently heard from a group of alumnae of Color and allies, both on social media, and then in follow-up discussions with Anne Glass, Head of School, and Dr. Clyde Beverly, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We heard firsthand accounts of their experiences of overt racism and microaggressions they experienced as Purnell students. The alumnae prepared an outline of specific incidents and experiences, which they each described in turn. Importantly, they had also developed a list of action steps for the current administration and Board of Trustees to consider. We are grateful for their thoughtful engagement and preparation.

As current leaders of Purnell, we are accountable for our past, our present, and our future in creating a legacy for our school community. We are committed to fulfilling our mission, founding guidelines and diversity statement. We promote access and equity for all students to all academic, student life, and leadership opportunities. To the extent Purnell may have fallen short of these goals, these principles, ideals, and values continue to guide the work we must do to construct an academic and social environment that brings out the best in each of us. This includes a shared living space that ensures equity and belonging for each community member. We have the courage and humility to address this history and our current school climate and structures with a Plan of Action that is direct, tangible and long-lasting.

We would like to reinforce our acknowledgement of the past, the pain and hurt, and actions that caused some of our alumnae to feel that their Purnell experience did not provide a culture of inclusiveness. Purnell takes responsibility to improve conditions, structures, opportunities and participation in our community. We may not always get it right, but we are committed to doing our very best to address practices, protocols, structures, and daily interactions with guidance, accountability, and willingness to make adjustments.

Importantly, we acknowledge that changing the complexion of our faculty, administration, and Board will not result in immediate improvements in our school climate. It will take time to see the fruits of our initiatives. That is why you will see accountability and progress assessment as part of our Plan of Action.



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On behalf of Purnell School, the writers of this Statement of Commitment commit to the following Plan for Action, which is organized into three categories: Leadership, Engagement, and Accountability. It includes commitments of all members of our community including our Board of Trustees administration, staff, and faculty, and students. This plan will become part of school policy beginning this year and sustained as we move forward.

Plan for Action: Leadership, Engagement and Accountability

With respect to **Leadership**, Purnell will:

1. Effective immediately, dedicate resources to support the action plan.
2. Create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force composed of faculty, staff, parents, and students to support the implementation of the school's anti-racism plan, as well as other diversity initiatives intended to make Purnell School a fully equitable and inclusive community.
3. Identify, recruit and onboard new members of the Board of Trustees, so that the Board's composition more accurately reflects the diversity of our student body.
4. Re-evaluate recruitment, hiring, and retention practices to add racial and ethnic diversity to faculty and staff. This will include Purnell's attendance at job fairs targeted at diverse applicant pools and posting open positions on hiring sites dedicated to representing professionals of Color.
5. Provide annually, starting this school year, and require ongoing training in anti-racism and cultural awareness for all members of the Board.
6. Mandate all administrative leadership, faculty and staff participate in anti-racist and culturally-sensitive training at the start of every year and annually thereafter.
7. Seek out and partner with minority-owned and/or minority-managed vendors and outside contractors.

To improve individual, group, and community **Engagement**, Purnell will:

1. Include the Purnell School Diversity Statement in both the Family and Employee Handbooks so that is part of our mutual commitment to our community values.
2. Provide and require training for all students and faculty on anti-racism, racial identity, and cultural competency throughout each school year.
3. Host facilitated Courageous Conversations in small and large groups on current topics at least every other week for all students.



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4. Continue to support the formation and function of Affinity Groups, such as Students of Color, LGBTQA+, and others.
5. Re-evaluate and restructure disciplinary procedures.
6. Create a clear, safe, reporting channel to the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Beverly, for members of the community to address incidents of overt and subtle racism.
7. Establish policy that, at the discretion of the Director of DEI and the Head of School, acts of overt racism, use of hate speech, and/or microaggressions by any member of the community will be subject to disciplinary action.
8. Invite alumnae of Color to participate in the Phenomenal Woman speaker series and alumnae panel discussions.
9. Invite our parent community to be actively involved in discussions and events focused on anti-racism, equity and inclusion.
10. Continue to make Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day a required event for all students and a graduation requirement.
11. Continue to acknowledge and celebrate heritage months/days (Hispanic Heritage Month, Indigenous Peoples' Day, Black History Month, Pride Day, etc.)
12. Continue to monitor and improve curriculum to increase visibility and knowledge of marginalized groups in English Language Art, STEM, US and World History, and Creative Arts offerings to provide all students a more complete view of the contributions of People of Color, the consequential history of slavery, Jim Crow, and systemic oppression of Black people and other marginalized groups.

With respect to **Accountability**, Purnell School will:

1. Administer Campus Climate surveys to all students and staff twice each academic year to assess the impact of these action steps on the campus culture and students' experiences.
2. Incorporate survey responses as a regular part of the Board strategic planning and administrative management across all areas of school operations and structures.
3. Examine discipline policies, procedures, and practices related to bias and involving a student of Color on a regular basis.
4. Ensure that students of Color are encouraged to apply for Enhanced Diplomas and other enrichment opportunities.
5. Examine college counseling practices to ensure that each student is encouraged and supported to reach for her schools of choice and apply early decision/action, if that is her and her family's preference.
6. Form an Alumnae Advisory Council to provide feedback and suggestions for further improvements in campus climate and DEI related issues.



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7. Distribute the annual report of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to the Purnell community on the progress of this Plan of Action, including metrics on diversity in the student body, faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees.

As a result of this work we aim to strengthen who we are as a Purnell community and graduate women leaders who appreciate and will advocate for the value of diversity and inclusiveness in all our lives and our shared future.

Respectfully,

Anne M. Glass, Ed.M.
Head of School

Martha Gallo
Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dr. Clyde Beverly, III
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Genevieve Madigan
Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees