



Facing Forward

AN UPDATE ON THE PLAN FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION FOR PRINCETON DAY SCHOOL

For many, the New Year is a time to do away with the old. While this may have been the case for years past, things are different today. 2021 reminds us of the constants: the constant need to adhere to health and safety guidelines; the constant hard work of our teachers and students; the constant of the racial injustice and marginalization experienced by so many. Fortunately for us, the constant also applies to all of our dedication to the work ahead. January and February have always been busy months at Princeton Day School, and this year has been no different.

As you read the attached update on the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work being done so thoughtfully on our campus, please know that there are also innumerable small moments of progress that are beginning to add up. These small things — conversations, moments of insight, expressions of empathy and partnership — inspire us to keep moving forward.

The strides that we are making would not be possible without your commitment and support.

Thank you.

Paul Stellato
Head of School

Anthony McKinley
*Director of Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion*

Dr. Diana Artis
CEO, Olive Branch Educators

An update on our work in January and February:

SECOND ALL-SCHOOL FACULTY WORKSHOP

On Monday, 1/11/21, our first all-school faculty meeting of 2021 picked up where we left off in the fall. In continuing our focus on race, we revisited the fall meeting with a memory recall, then recounted the individual work we've all done since then, focusing on the call to action. Additionally, we reflected on how our continued self-work has shifted our understanding of our personal racial identities, as well as those of others.

DEI COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE ALUMNI COUNCIL

On Wednesday, 1/13/21, from 7:30-8:30, the DEI committee of the Alumni Council, chaired by Zaneta Shannon Chambers '95, had its first meeting. The meeting consisted of introductions, discussion of plans and purpose, and the roll out of the alumni self-identification survey to assist with collecting accurate data on how PDS alumni self identify. The form has been distributed to over 50% of PDS alumni.

MLK ASSEMBLY

On Wednesday, 1/20, during our Upper School assembly period, the Community Multicultural Development Team (CMDT) organized a multidivisional program that focused on King's six principles of nonviolence. The goal was to move away from King's "I Have a Dream" speech and focus on the full range of who he was as a human being, how our heroes don't have to be perfect, and the strategy and intentionality that went into organizing protests.

A REFLECTION ON NATIONAL EVENTS ASSEMBLY

On Thursday, 1/21/21, Acting Head of the Upper School Chris Rhodes addressed the Upper School after the uprising that took place on at the United States Capitol on January 6. In his assembly, Rhodes reflected on national events and how we can move forward as a community. The main lesson was to move beyond tribalism and hyper-partisanship by facing issues with humility and a desire to create a just society.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DEI FACULTY MEETING

In addition to the all-school faculty meetings, we're also organizing DEI training departmentally and divisionally. On Tuesday, 1/26, Middle School DEI representative and history teacher, Victor Cirilo led a divisional meeting that focused on name stories, introducing the framework of "mirrors and windows."

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY ASSEMBLY

On Friday, 1/29, Rabbi David Levy addressed grades 8-12 during the Upper School assembly period. In line with conversations from the fall, Rabbi Levy, son of a Holocaust survivor, shared his father's story of fear, hate, bravery, love, and action. At every moment when Mr. Levy needed someone to help him, someone did, a message that resonated well with our students who have a genuine interest in being upstanders. The CMDT focused their January Newsletter on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We look forward to cementing our relationship with Rabbi Levy moving forward.

ADDITIONAL SURVEYS

CMDT successfully launched a Middle School affinity group survey to help guide our next steps in offering specific spaces for students. New affinity groups will alleviate the pressure on the larger students of color (SoC) group that tried to address the needs of all.

Julie Cucchi, Director of Admission and Financial Aid, and the admissions office successfully launched a race and ethnicity self-identification survey for current families to provide us with accurate data on how our student body identifies.

Standards of Conduct Chairs Michelle Simonds and Elizabeth Monroe successfully administered a survey on the use of Equitable Discipline in all three divisions.

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN NEW ENGLAND (AISNE) MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

On Saturday, 2/6/21, 20 Middle School students attended the AISNE Middle School Diversity Conference. This year's conference, hosted virtually by The Rivers School in Massachusetts, offered workshops on identity, social justice skills and self-reflection, providing students the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation, collaboration and connection with Middle School students from other schools.

G.L.O.W

On Monday, 2/8/21, students of G.L.O.W (Gay, Lesbian or Whatever) participated in a Q&A with the community. The panel allowed community members to ask questions about LGBTQ+ issues and gave panelists a chance to share their stories and experiences. Topics ranged from how to identify in terms of pronouns to how teachers can best support LGBTQ+ students in the classroom.

UNCOVERING MERCER COUNTY'S FORGOTTEN PAST

On Tuesday, 2/9/21, Elaine Buck and Beverly Mills educated the community (grades 3-12) on the history of the enslavement of captured Africans in Mercer County. Many classes followed up with thoughtful conversations and reflections on the informative presentation. CMDT focused its February Newsletter on Buck's and Mills' visit by focusing on teaching and learning resources.

LOWER SCHOOL FACULTY MEETING

On Wednesday, 2/17/21, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Tony McKinley, visited the Lower School division meeting to provide an update on the School's progress thus far. After discussing Facing Forward, the progress of the seven working groups, and the departmental training led by Dr. Artis of Olive Branch Educators, McKinley fielded questions from the division.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Chinese Club, along with the Chinese Parents Association and CMDT, hosted our annual Lunar New Year Celebration on Thursday, 2/18, from 4-5pm. The student-led YouTube Premiere celebration highlighted the important roles that family and tradition play in our lives. This video currently has over 700 views. Additionally, Paul Stellato announced that Lunar New Year will be an official holiday on our school calendar.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Chef Brian and Flik dedicated each Thursday of the month to a meal that highlighted Black culture and offered recipes, short videos, stories, and interviews on Black chefs and the evolution of historic Black dishes.

Black Student Union (BSU) faculty advisor Alana Allen and Upper School librarian Amy Matlack organized a Black history timeline in the theater lobby with an interactive website for remote learners.

Allen also oversees a BSU Instagram account curated by the leaders of the BSU that educates its followers by promoting information on lesser known Black figures who have contributed to history.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ASSEMBLY

The CMDT and BSU hosted our annual Black History Month celebration on Monday, 2/22, from 5-6pm. This year, we extended the virtual invitation to alumni. Close to 200 people logged on to witness stories and readings from all three divisions. Students and faculty honored members of their families with photographs and heartfelt tributes. Lastly, we were grateful to hear from Keynote Michael Reed '03, Chief of Staff to Congressman Eric Swalwell. In the event that you were unable to attend, here's the link to the recording: [Princeton Day School Black History Month Celebration 2021](#).

QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK?

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