



## THE LAWRENCEVILLE SCHOOL 2019-2020

June 17, 2020

Dear Lawrenceville School Community,

These past few weeks, your stories of personal, painful, heartbreaking experiences of racism at Lawrenceville have left a deep and lasting impression. Through the Instagram account @blackatlawrenceville and the Black Lives Matter movement, we are witnessing testimonies of trauma that Black members of our community have experienced for years. Some of you have reached out directly to us with your concerns, and those letters have been equally searing and poignant. I want to start by saying that I am sorry -- sorry for past wrongs, and equally sorry for issues that have occurred on my watch. If leadership is about serving, I clearly have not met that standard for many of you. I write to you now to affirm that we are listening and that your systemic concerns will be acted upon. These testimonies, along with dozens of other letters and expressions of hurt and pain, will help us engage the entire community in creating a Diversity Action Plan for a better, more inclusive, more antiracist Lawrenceville. I am grateful that you have spoken out to share your concerns and high expectations of our community, and demanded more from us. I am saddened and angry that you must revisit these acts of racism and, in doing so, experience additional trauma.

We are working to make certain that we hear all stories, learn from students and alumni, and take appropriate and clear action steps to move us all forward. Our new [Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement, Rick Holifield](#), will help lead this effort, and he is already meeting with Black members of our community, listening to their concerns, and guiding our next steps to develop spaces for dialogue, offer support, and build upon the past two years of focused work by our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to create a more inclusive, just community. I am eager to learn from and partner with Rick. We will provide updates and additional details of our progress as a community on our [Diversity and Inclusion webpage](#). In addition, in the coming weeks, Rick will lead a series of virtual Town Hall meetings, beginning with a session specifically for our Black alumni, to hear directly from our community members. Meeting information and invitations to attend - as well as an introductory video from Rick - will be shared shortly.

As we look ahead in the very near term, we can and must do better. It is unacceptable that members of our community are confronted with racial bias anywhere, but of all places, our School must be a safe haven where respect underlies every word spoken, every action taken. I am committed to creating a safer, more inclusive environment in accordance with our mission to challenge our students to lead lives of learning, integrity, and high purpose. This begins with an honest reckoning of what has been occurring. When we began our investigation into past sexual misconduct in 2016, we urged alumni and current students to come forward and share their experiences because we truly wanted to confront the past. We spoke of seeking the truth, and following it wherever it might lead us. We have that same commitment now. If members of this community, past or present, have information to share regarding racial bias encountered at Lawrenceville, you may do so confidentially through [EthicsPoint](#), our anonymous reporting channel hosted by a third party hotline provider. Alternatively, you may prefer to communicate directly with Rick Holifield ([dei@lawrenceville.org](mailto:dei@lawrenceville.org)); or Erika Worthy, our Director of Human Resources ([eworthy@lawrenceville.org](mailto:eworthy@lawrenceville.org); 609-620-6114); or you may prefer to communicate directly with me ([smurray@lawrenceville.org](mailto:smurray@lawrenceville.org); 609-896-0408). All community members must feel that they are safe, that they are valued, that they will be heard, and that they belong, and we will be guided by a deep concern for the well-being of any individual who comes forward.

Already, the sharing of information and the telling of stories has reignited a sense of urgency, and it is clear that we have an opportunity to act that must not be squandered. I invite you to be part of this important process and ask for your help in advancing Lawrenceville to become a more equitable community. We are listening, and we are committed to creating a better Lawrenceville, a school that refuses to tolerate racial injustice and truly seeks the best for all.

Sincerely,

Stephen S. Murray H'54 '55 '65 '15 P'16 '21  
The Shelby Cullom Davis '26 Head Master  
The Lawrenceville School