



THE LAWRENCEVILLE SCHOOL 2019-2020

June 19, 2020

Dear Lawrenceville School Community,

Today is Juneteenth (Freedom Day), and this date marks the 155th anniversary of the moment when enslaved people in Texas finally received word that President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation more than two and a half years earlier on January 1, 1863. While our country continues to reckon with centuries of racism and discrimination, we must pause and focus on what we can do individually and collectively to dismantle systemic and structural barriers to equality.

In observance of Juneteenth, we closed campus today at noon. This was a compensated, early dismissal for all Lawrenceville employees. My intent was for this time away from campus to offer opportunities for education, reflection—and inspiration.

As part of our continuing efforts to educate our community about issues of social justice and racial inequality, we will provide copies of the all-School read, "[The Fire Next Time](#)" by James Baldwin, to all employees. Our librarians have also created a [list of resources](#) for additional reading on the history of Juneteenth and social justice issues. Additionally, I encourage all faculty, staff, and students to participate in the "[Lawrenceville Community Project: Bearing Witness to Spring 2020.](#)"

These are some of the small steps we are taking to make Lawrenceville a more equitable and just community. Each of us has a role to play as we come together to create meaningful and lasting change. Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts, questions, or concerns with me directly at smurray@lawrenceville.org or via dei@lawrenceville.org as we continue our journey of reconciliation together. We have much work to do, but I believe that, with your partnership, we are up to the challenge.

Thank you,

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