

INTRODUCING MULGRAVE'S NEW DIRECTOR OF

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

ALYSSA UKANI (she/her)
GRADE 11 STUDENT

In the fall, Mulgrave will welcome Cynthia Roberson as our new (and first-ever) Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In this role, she aims to support, teach, and advocate for members of the Mulgrave community in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). This includes making connections with staff and across the school, as well as re-examining policy to ensure that the DEIJ principles are being upheld and that everyone in our community feels safe and comfortable expressing and sharing their identities.

Ms. Roberson has been an advocate for most of her life. Starting in high school, she and a group of her peers advocated for African-American and Asian-American representation on their student council. She continued to advocate for her students when she began teaching.

After graduate school, Ms. Roberson began teaching at a school in Philadelphia as a literacy coach, then transitioned to work in corporate America. She knew she had to return to education, though, when she saw her daughter having the same types of struggles she had during her time in school. "I decided I didn't want her, or anyone that looks like her,

to continue to have those kinds of experiences. The only way I felt to be effective, was to do it from the inside," she says.

She got her Masters in Education and has taught in the US, Nigeria, and China. Throughout those experiences, Ms. Roberson was most surprised by the universality of the challenges. "The challenges don't change. The population of students change, the teachers change, the demographic of teachers change, but the challenges don't change."

Ms. Roberson continued to advocate for equity and inclusion at each of the schools she worked at. "This is before I even knew there was a DEI track. I didn't know it was a job...I was just doing it because I knew it needed to be done." Once she discovered the established DEIJ sector of education, it felt like the stars aligned. For Ms. Roberson, one of the most exciting things about Mulgrave, other than meeting all of the staff and students who eagerly await her arrival, is that "the work was already being done and that the community was interested in the work... because, believe it or not, that is actually pretty rare in the DEI space."

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO AGREE WITH YOU. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO WANT TO DO IT TOO. DO IT."

