

## WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism

## UPDATE

August 2021



As we prepare for the opening of the 2021-2022 school year, I wanted to provide an update on our work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and anti-racism for the second half of last year. This is a companion to our November 2020 update, which can be found online at [www.westridge.org/DEI](http://www.westridge.org/DEI).

Before last summer, when the murder of George Floyd sparked a national racial reckoning as well as one at Westridge, our strategic plan (published January 2020) prioritized DEI work, but we had yet to truly activate that new commitment. Today, change called for by you, the members of our community, is underway. The number of people from across the constituencies of our community engaging regularly in conversations around bias, equity, and anti-racism has grown significantly and was sustained throughout the year. And while I am heartened with the progress we were able to make in this pandemic year, I look forward to even more change this coming school year as we increase staff time and financial resources for our DEI programs. Indeed, we have added four positions (two full-time and two part-time) whose roles include responsibilities critical to this work, including a full-time director of equity, Ian Tatum, who joined us in the summer.

This year, we made important strides in the areas outlined in our strategic plan and raised by students, families, and alumnae. These include:

- Work to improve school culture through policy changes, faculty, student, and parent education, and grassroots efforts such as the faculty and staff created and led Anti-Racist Working Group.

- Increased support for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) students, hiring a counselor trained in serving BIPOC populations, and establishing a support group for BIPOC students.
- Training on best practices for consistency of anti-bias and DEI practices in teaching, led by Westridge alumna Dr. Kristi Woods '78, that will inform our curriculum review.
- Expansion of our network of organizations helping us to increase representation in and support of our faculty and staff and student populations.

I hope the following report conveys that we are committed to DEI and anti-racism as a permanent and central part of our school and community. We owe it to our students of today and tomorrow to provide a safe, inclusive educational home and to be a part of the change needed for a more just nation for all.

Thank you to the many members of our community who encouraged Westridge to take a more active stance and for your continued interest and support.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth J. McGregor**  
Head of School

# FOUNDATION FOR

# DEI & Anti-Racist Work

## OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

This 16-member committee includes representation from across the constituencies of Westridge as well as members from outside of the school. Formed in the late fall, the committee met three times this year and will meet quarterly each year going forward with the goal of ensuring focus and accountability for progress in this work. See the 2020-2021 DEI Oversight Committee at the end of this report.

## FACULTY & STAFF DEI TASK FORCE

More than 60 faculty and staff members volunteered to serve on the 2020-2021 DEI Task Force. The group met six times and broke into subcommittees focused on:

- Pedagogy
- Professional development
- Student and parent education and development
- Traditions, customs, and school culture
- Implementation of best practices.

Subcommittees presented findings to the entire faculty and staff. These reports will be central to briefing the incoming director of equity over the summer.

## DEANS OF STUDENT VOICES

Westridge alumna Tamara Jaffe '08 was hired in January to coordinate DEI programming in the lower and middle school divisions, including expanding affinity groups of our youngest students. She works closely with the Upper School deans of Student Voices to ensure we are addressing DEI and anti-racism in a consistent and comprehensive manner across all grades.

## PART-TIME COUNSELOR

Sheri Johnson, MA, M.Ed., MFT joined Westridge in January, filling a position related to both the DEI and social-emotional wellness components of our strategic plan. Sheri is available to all students but brings tremendous experience in working with students of color and holds a master's degree in marriage and family therapy with a specialization in African American family studies.

## DIRECTOR OF EQUITY

Following a national search, Ian Tatum was appointed as director of equity and will serve on the school's administrative leadership team. He will join Westridge this summer.

## **FOUNDATION FOR**

# DEI & Anti-Racist Work

### **DIRECTOR OF TEACHING & LEARNING**

James Evans joined Westridge in July as director of teaching and learning, leading faculty development and guiding our ongoing initiatives in academic excellence and innovation. He will work closely with Mr. Tatum in this work to review curriculum and pedagogy.

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### **CONSULTANTS**

In addition to continuing our ongoing relationship with a generalist in DEI work, this year we engaged consultants specializing in issues relevant to the Black and African American, Latinx, and APISA (Asian, Pacific Islander, and South Asian) populations.

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### **PRIVATE SCHOOL VILLAGE**

Westridge became a founding champion of Private School Village, a non-profit organization that provides programming, events, and resources to support Black families throughout their private school experience.

### **BUDGET**

Understanding that sustained DEI work requires resources, we have expanded funds budgeted for DEI next year. Fundraising efforts targeted for DEI programs increased in 2020-2021, and we received several gifts including a significant bequest adding to the existing Adelaide and Alexander Hixon Fund for Lower School Diversity. In addition, we committed to a senior-level staff position in our new director of equity and three other positions integral to DEI work.



# Curriculum & Program

## **CURRICULUM AUDIT**

The Lower and Middle School divisions completed a two-year curriculum mapping project, and department chairs worked with teachers to identify racial, cultural, and ethnic perspectives represented in the Upper School curriculum. In anticipation of the formal analysis phase of this school-wide curriculum review, Westridge alumnae and curriculum expert Dr. Kristi Woods '78 trained our department and curriculum chairs and division directors. Dr. Woods provided guidance in best practices for incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) resources into curriculum, and establishing a shared pedagogical framework to ensure consistency of anti-bias and DEI practice among Westridge faculty.

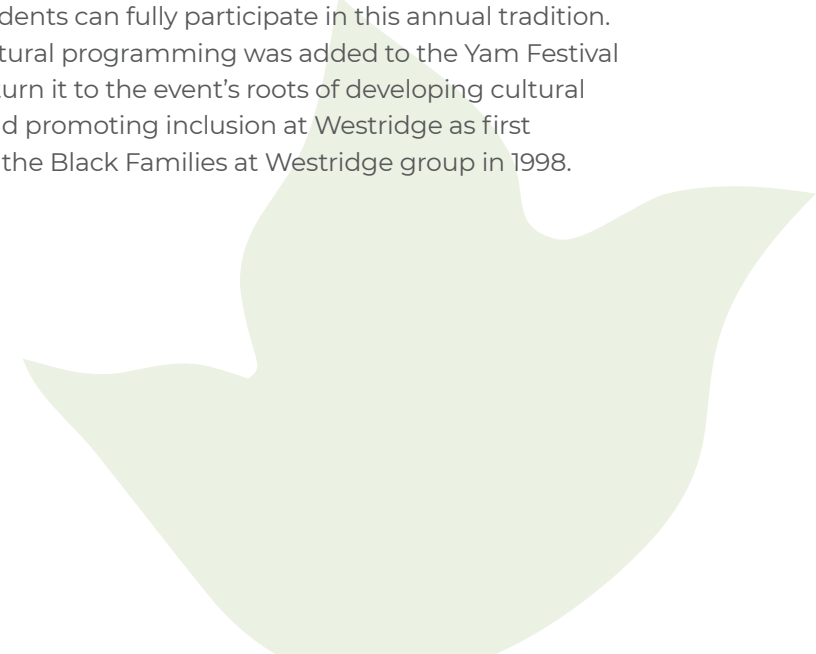
## **DATA ANALYSIS**

As an additional measure of understanding how biases have impacted our students and program, the school is in the midst of a multi-year, expansive baseline data project. This work will centralize, organize, and standardize 10 years of student data and many thousands of individual

datapoints. Specific areas of data include: course placement, grades, college matriculation, standardized test scores, and narrative grade report comments, among others. The data is being compiled in stages and will be analyzed by a third-party expert who specializes in this type of institutional data analysis and will set the foundation for systematic data collection and review going forward.

## **REVIEW OF TRADITIONS AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS**

Though more formal work in this area will begin next year, changes were made to the Junior Ring Ceremony and the Yam Festival this year. Junior Rings are now purchased by the school so that all students can fully participate in this annual tradition. A week of cultural programming was added to the Yam Festival in order to return it to the event's roots of developing cultural awareness and promoting inclusion at Westridge as first conceived by the Black Families at Westridge group in 1998.



## ANTI-RACIST

# Education & Programming/Students

### STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

- November: Black@Westridge
- January: MLK's Legacy: Activism in Art Throughout the Years
- February: Responding to and disrupting micro-aggressions
- March: Anti-Asian Bias and Hate

### LS/MS AFFINITY GROUPS

New Lower and Middle School Dean of Student Voices Tam Jaffe '08 spent the spring interacting with students to better understand their current knowledge and literacy in the areas of DEI and working on a program for 2021-2022 entitled JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion). JEDI will support lower and middle school students with understanding who they are (racial and ethnic identity) and where their power lies to help make our school, our community, and our world more inclusive.

### BIPOC STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP.

In March, members of our student support and Student Voices teams formed this group to offer regular space for BIPOC students to share their experiences and support one another.

### SDLC & YOUTH ACTION PROJECT

Six students attended the national Student Diversity Leadership Conference, and five students attended the Youth Action Project, a conference for students of all ethnic backgrounds focused on topics of white privilege and other forms of oppression.

## **ANTI-RACIST**

# Education & Programming/ Faculty & Staff

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

As follow-up to our fall professional development day focused on racial equity and equity literacy, our February professional development focused on creating pathways to courageous conversations around race with both adults and students in our community. These meetings were supplemented with faculty/staff meetings focused on work of the DEI Task Force and reporting on the preparations for cultural proficiency in the upcoming curriculum review.

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### **ANTI-RACIST WORKING GROUP**

A group of approximately 50 faculty and staff members met every two weeks with the goal of continuing their personal growth and supporting their colleagues in this work.

### **POCC AND WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCES**

Because these important conferences were held online this year, many more faculty and staff were able to participate than in typical years. Fifteen faculty and staff members attended POCC (the National Association of Independent School's annual People of Color Conference), up from 5-6 who typically travel to the event. Seventeen people attended the online White Privilege conference.



## ANTI-RACIST

# Education & Programming/ Parents & Alumnae

### SPEAKER SERIES

- o November: Race in the City panel discussion for parents and students featuring three emerging LA civic leaders.
- o January: Normalizing Conversations around Race, facilitated by Ian Tatum
- o May: Asian and Asian Americans in the U.S., facilitated by Jessy Molina

### LATINX PARENT GROUP

Based upon a 2020 exploratory meeting and a formal listening session with Latinx families in January 2021, a parent-led group entitled Comunidad Latinx at Westridge was formed in March. Comunidad is designed as a warm, supportive space for families to honor and celebrate their Latinx heritage while sharing information, inspiration, and encouragement to one another. The group held a May welcome event for Latinx families who will join Westridge in the fall.

### APISA LISTENING SESSION

As the school engaged in the topic of anti-Asian bias and violence in response to national and local events, we became aware that many Westridge parents of APISA background

did not understand that our DEI work included members of their communities. In May, we held a listening session, facilitated by Dr. Dawn Lee Tu, a professor and DEI consultant, to address this misconception and to provide parents with a forum for discussing their experiences and think about what groups or support they wish to see from the school. Additional meetings will be held to formalize groups and opportunities for the APISA community. These groups, and the Latinx parent group, will function similarly to the established Students at Westridge of African Heritage Group (SWAHG).

### ALUMNAE AFFINITY GROUPS

Asian American, Black, and Latinx alumnae affinity groups have been formalized and, among other meetings, gathered in break-out chat rooms at this year's virtual Alumnae Weekend. The groups are also engaging with student affinity groups through online meetings, including two recent panels featuring Asian American alumnae. Black and Latinx alumnae have created mentorship programs for current students and, in May, the Latinx affinity hosted two panel discussions for students on the Latinx college experience. In addition, members of the Westridge Black affinity group are connecting with alumnae from other Pasadena independent schools.

# Community Diversity

## EXPANDING DIVERSITY OF STUDENT POPULATION

- o Westridge became a founding partner school of Private School Axis. The Axis creates a bridge between families and schools by helping underserved families of color explore, apply to, transition into, and navigate independent schools in a first-of-its kind, comprehensive model rooted in a relational, community-building, service-oriented approach.
- o The admission office continued its Parent Ambassador affinity program and translation services (Spanish and Mandarin) for prospective families.
- o Current enrollment data for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year show that 69% of the Westridge student body identify as students of color with:
  - 7.2% identifying as Black/African American or multiracial Black/African American,
  - 15.8% identifying as Latinx or multiracial Latinx,
  - 33.3% identifying as Asian or Asian American.

Compared to last year's data, these figures show a modest but continued increase in racial and ethnic diversity in the student body.

## EXPANDING DIVERSITY AMONG FACULTY AND STAFF

- o The school expanded relationships with recruiting firms that specialize in identifying and placing candidates of color.
- o Westridge Human Resources began implementing techniques learned in anti-bias training, working to broaden the school's network of relationships that lead to candidate referrals and locations for job postings.

Stay up-to-date by visiting

[www.westridge.org/DEI](http://www.westridge.org/DEI).

Reach out to us with questions  
at [advancement@westridge.org](mailto:advancement@westridge.org).



# DEI Oversight Committee

## 2020-2021

**DAVID SAMUELS, Chair**  
*Community Member at Large*

**SEEMA AHMAD '99**  
*Alumna*

**MAYA ALVAREZ-GALVAN '88**  
*Alumna*

**ALICIA HENRY '01**  
*Alumna*

**HIMA VATTI**  
*Community Member at Large*

**LISA BURKE**  
*Current Parent*

**LISA PRINCE**  
*Current Parent*

**ERICA ROSALES**  
*Current Parent*

**KENZIE BROWNSMITH**  
*Faculty/Staff*

**BRANDON KRUEH**  
*Faculty/Staff*

**JESSICA PEREZ DEL TORO**  
*Faculty/Staff*

**DANIELLE D'ANTUONO '21**  
*Student*

**BAYLEY DICKINSON '21**  
*Student*

**LAUREEN CHANG**  
*Trustee (DEI Co-Chair)/Past Parent*

**MARC HARRIS**  
*Trustee (DEI Co-Chair)/Past Parent*

**SARAH JALLO**  
*Westridge Leadership Team*

