



COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Breck Community,

I am excited to share with you the report from our year long equity audit with Design Impact. When I began as Head of School at Breck in 2017, it was clear our school had a longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and was eager to learn more about these topics. Importantly, there was a consistent curiosity across all stakeholder groups about understanding where our culture needed to change and improve. This document is a culmination of two years of stewardship by the DEI Committee of our Board of Trustees, of self study that was community led, and community centered. I couldn't be prouder of where our journey has brought us.



Within these pages you will see the evolution of our school's deep commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable community in concrete and practicable actions. School leaders, faculty, parents, alumni, students — every stakeholder group at Breck is represented. These initiatives fall into seven clear categories, all identified as being areas that will result in meaningful cultural change, not only benefiting those of non-dominant identities, but all community members.

I would be remiss to not thank the many people who worked tirelessly to bring this to life. Thank you to Susan Bass Roberts and the DEI Committee of the Board who initiated this project and guided at the Board level. Thank you to Frederique Schmidt and Alexis Kent who served as guides to the Core Team, successfully facilitating this process. And a huge thank you to our Core Team. The hours you committed, the time you spent listening, the discussions you led, have brought us where we are, in this moment, which is ready, willing, and with a plan in place. I am deeply grateful to every community member who contributed to this project, from focus groups, to interview calls, to reflective conversations, to editing drafts; there were numerous tasks that needed to be executed, all in the middle of a pandemic with school still in session.

But most of all, I am deeply grateful to every community member who shared lived experiences that were painful, disappointing, and moments where we caused harm. Please know we are committed to do better. Your voices have guided our commitments and it is an honor to steward our next steps on your behalf.

At Breck, we know all Mustangs — past, present, and future — are inextricably connected by our missional commitments and this work is living proof that we are here for each other and for the greater good of our school community.

Warmly,

Natalia Rico Hernández, Ed.D.
Head of School

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Natalia R." with a stylized flourish at the end.

A photograph of four students in a classroom, all wearing face masks and reading books. The students are seated in a row, with the focus on the student in the foreground who is a young woman with dark curly hair. The background is slightly blurred, showing a typical classroom environment with bookshelves and educational posters. The entire image has a blue tint, and the word 'BACKGROUND' is overlaid in large white letters.

BACKGROUND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, Breck School embarked on a journey to listen deeply to its community, learn what they needed to heal, and move to action.

Breck School's commitment to servant leadership, social justice, and the common good pre-dates this journey. In recent years, the school had observed and responded to a growing desire to "affirm and uphold our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion." But the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 placed an unignorable urgency to act.

In 2020, Breck School partnered with nonprofit consultancy Design Impact (DI) to identify their most strategic areas for impact. Together, we asked:

How might we co-create long-lasting social change within Breck and have those commitments felt by all constituents?

The engagement process, facilitated by Design Impact, focused on identifying the school's

current challenges, giving room to heal, and co-creating actions together.

The work was led by a core team representing different communities at Breck, including students, staff, faculty, school leaders, alumni, and parents.

Design Impact started by interviewing students, faculty, alumni, and parents. They shared a report of what they heard, a synthesis of some of the community's challenges, perceptions of Breck's DEI efforts, and what the community saw as the major successes and barriers to change.

Breck shared the findings through a series of community conversations, which helped establish a broader understanding of the school's challenges and opportunities.

Finally, a cohort of Breck students, parents, faculty, alumni, and administrators met to develop actions to help Breck live into its DEI goals.

Through this process, the Breck community prioritized **seven key commitments for Breck to undertake:**



This report details those commitments, the process to develop those commitments, and key actions to help Breck move forward as an institution that values belonging, growth, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This process and the resulting ideas were rooted in **deep listening** and **co-creation** with students, staff, faculty, school leaders, alumni, and parents. This project specifically and intentionally focused on perspectives from Breck community members who are historically underrepresented and disproportionately affected by racial and social equity efforts.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION



DISCOVERY, FOCUS GROUPS, & INTERVIEWS



SHARED UNDERSTANDING



SHARED ACTION

Summer 2020

This project was led by a **core team** of Breck community members whose experiences and expertise were critical to this project.

Summer/Fall 2020

Design Impact (DI) **interviewed dozens of Breck community members.** Through focus groups and interviews, DI uncovered some of the challenges they face, their perceptions of Breck's DEI efforts, and what the community saw as the major successes and barriers to change.

Winter 2021

Breck widely shared the stories and insights that Design Impact uncovered with the larger community. These **community conversations** helped establish a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Breck.

Spring 2021

Breck community members developed a **series of commitments** to help Breck **move from listening to action.** These commitments recommend coordinated actions to help Breck live into its DEI goals. The community co-revised these commitments with various Breck stakeholders.

RESOURCES



Read [Design Impact's findings](#) from their discovery process

A photograph of a theater audience and a stage. The audience is seated in bleachers on the left, and two people are seated on the stage on the right. The image is overlaid with a dark blue filter. The text "COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

OVERVIEW

The year long process engaged numerous stakeholders and hundreds of voices. This included any document pertaining to DEI at Breck, from letters from alumni as well as community-wide surveys. All of this data contributed to the development of the following seven areas, which were determined to be the most meaningful opportunities for change.

Following the initial writing process, the core team revised the commitments with various stakeholders, adding clear roles and responsibilities to ensure Breck could sustainably enact these commitments.



COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

ESTABLISH A RESTORATIVE ETHOS

Restorative practices are a relationship-centered, holistic approach to creating a healthy, safe, and equitable community. By centering the teaching and practice of community building, conflict resolution, and communication skills, we support healthy relationships, through accountability when harm is caused.

A **restorative ethos** at Breck means that we commit to fostering healthy relationships, belonging mindsets, and equitable classrooms. Breck stakeholders will co-create a school culture where:

- Every person is deemed worthy of dignity and respect;
- Conflict is understood to be a normal aspect of human relationships and a source for learning and growth;
- Community building and repairing harm are rooted in the understanding that we are all interconnected.

When processing instances of harm, community members will prioritize the individuals who have experienced harm in order to move past simple apologies into actualized acknowledgment. The restoration of relationship will be facilitated on the terms of the harmed individual(s), honoring their lived experience and agency. Through intentional conversations, the organized response will include education about social structures, inequities, and biases in which such harm may be rooted.

ESTABLISH A RESTORATIVE ETHOS

Action #1: Establish common understanding and shared expectations of restorative ethos throughout the school among staff, students, and families.

BY SEPTEMBER 2021:

- Deans and Division Directors collaborate on how accountability, education, and restoration will live in each division
- Attend MN Department of Education training on student-led Restorative Practices
- Invite and host US student leaders to introductory training focused on restorative ethos and best practices
- Offer two separate optional training sessions in Circle protocol for students and faculty

BY JANUARY 2022:

- Establish a Restorative Practices Leadership Group (RP Leadership Group) to set goals and strategize for establishing restorative practices at Breck within each division
- Present at a faculty meeting in each division on restorative ethos, building understanding, and establishing a common language
- Invite any parents/caregivers or alumni with formal restorative experience to join the RP Leadership Group, with the aim of engaging all stakeholders and leveraging their expertise
- Present to parents and students in concert with the Student Diversity and Inclusion Council (SDIC), on the topics of restorative ethos, establishing a common language and building understanding of the three pronged approach of accountability, education, and restoration
- Coordinate two additional Circle training opportunities for staff and students

BY JULY 2022:

- Present to the Board of Trustees on restorative ethos, establishing a common language and building understanding of the three pronged approach of accountability, education, and restoration
- Organize annual review of student handbook including the voices of Student Council and SDIC. Present recommended changes to both Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the student body
- Develop talking points about Breck's restorative ethos for Admissions
- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year

Action #2: Review purpose of the Upper School Integrity Council and a possible restructure as a Peer Conflict Resolution Council

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Discuss as a Upper School Administrative Team the students leadership groups and determine clear purpose for each one
- Outline steps for student-led committee to evaluate Integrity Council
- Explore models of a Peer Conflict Resolution Council

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Establish committee members and calendar of meetings
- Research, evaluate, and brainstorm possible models, including those used by comparable school communities
- Communicate with all stakeholder groups the purpose, progress, and next steps

BY JULY

2022:

- Make recommendations for the Integrity Council and a structure for a potential Peer Conflict Resolution
- Present final structure to student body, staff, and parent/caregiver community
- Identify adult council members and facilitate the application process for Integrity Council and/or Peer Conflict Resolution student leaders for the 2022-2023 school year
- Scaffold and schedule training for members of the council(s)
- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year

Action #3: Provide healing spaces for alumni to repair harm from lived experience at school.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Begin to develop a Guiding Team to lead restorative spaces, with the aim of responding to different needs across decades

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Establish a committee to lead restorative spaces with the aim of responding to different needs across decades
- Solicit professional guidance for facilitation if determined to be necessary
- Strategically invite school leaders to accompany as deemed appropriate by the committee

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Host one or two restorative circles or other facilitated restorative gathering
- Review and evaluate process for future iterations in following school years

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Division Directors, Deans, and Counselors attended a Restorative Practices training by Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education on Conferencing to Repair Harm
- *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education*, by Howard Zehr, was distributed to key school and student leaders
- Restorative principles incorporated into policy and practices including development of accountability, education, and restoration.
- Established the 9th grade academy with direct instruction in restorative ethos
- Hosted Upper School student restorative circles
- Presentation to Parents Association Parents/Caregivers about restorative ethos practices at Breck.
- Circle protocol used with 7th grade team and 7th grade students

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

CREATE BRAVE SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, FEEDBACK, & LEARNING

In addition to establishing a safe experience for all community members, Breck is committed to creating brave spaces. Brave spaces are learning environments in which people offer authentic voice to their lived experiences without judgment and where discomfort is understood as a natural part of relationships. Often this will require bravery. At Breck we value diversity of thought, knowing that the skills of critical thinking and discourse with dignity need to be cultivated and developed.

Our goal is to build formalized opportunities to learn about one another, share critical feedback, and have difficult conversations. These opportunities will offer skill development for students and a set of practices for inside and outside of the classroom. Leaning into discourse with dignity and brave spaces will also be foundational for adult community members as we seek to understand one another's lived experiences.

CREATE BRAVE SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, FEEDBACK, & LEARNING

Action #1: Foster collegial relationships between faculty and staff, focused on constructive feedback and skill development.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Utilize Critical Friends Groups (CFG) to foster collegial relationships and build a culture of sharing growth producing feedback
- Purposefully organize CFGs connected to identity including faculty input and leadership of a facilitator

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Teach steps for supporting a colleague: Empowerment, accompaniment, and advocacy
- Utilize scenarios using CFG protocol to develop faculty skill development when responding to an interaction connected to identity
- Use two different meeting protocols in CFG groups throughout the school year

BY JULY

2022:

- Solicit feedback from faculty on effectiveness of CFG groups and redesign for the following year

Action #2: Develop classrooms as brave spaces by both normalizing conversations about identity and DEI, actively developing skills in engaging in discourse with dignity.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Review and discuss Breck's current philosophy statement on Discourse with Dignity in the Academic Leadership Team and with faculty
- Provide training on co-creating community agreements

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Highlight examples of discussions happening on identity and DEI in each division that embody discourse with dignity in faculty workshops and/or divisional gatherings

BY JULY

2022:

- Incorporate questions on climate, culture, and belonging and discourse with dignity into student climate surveys across divisions. Share and reflect on data
- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year

Action #3: Examine current parent/caregiver engagement efforts, including all meetings and forums, reviewing for broad engagement and meaningful relationship development with both students and parents/caregivers as key voices.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Division Directors work to develop meaningful parent gatherings that include topics of identity, culture, and DEI, that incorporate conversation and feedback between administrators and parents/caregivers. Attention will be given to achieving broad engagement. We will identify and communicate with families who engage less and work to understand the barriers for participation
- Develop gatherings for dialogue with families of marginalized identities and school leaders that include parent/caregiver input to better understand the lived experience at Breck

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Schedule and communicate dates and times for listening to student voices, overtly naming the importance of understanding lived experiences and reflecting on alignment of practice
- Create, communicate, and implement a process for receiving, gathering, and cataloging student and parent/caregiver input and clearly establishing how this input influences the school processes

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Review parent/caregiver gatherings for effectiveness and redesign for implementation the following year

Action #4: Align affinity groups in all three divisions including support structure and guiding philosophy, building for coalition within and between groups.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Create and facilitate first affinity space in Lower School
- Create a list of affinity groups within the school
- Host a gathering of affinity group leaders to talk about support, boundaries, scheduling, and structure

BY JANUARY 2022:

- Discuss current affinity spaces and clubs, including Dare 2 B Real and student mentoring groups, centering on student needs, in Lower, Middle, and Upper School
- Communicate purpose and details of affinity group offerings to the Admissions team as well as the parent/caregiver community

BY JULY 2022:

- Create a parent/caregiver survey to collect information about future affinity group needs in all divisions
- Design PreK-12 affinity groups for the following year, identifying strengths and areas of growth.

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Planning began for first affinity group in Lower School in fall 2021
- White Ally space hosted by faculty leaders
- Discourse with Dignity statement finalized by Academic Leadership Team
- Several new affinity spaces established
- Regular gatherings of Affinity Group Leaders for mutual support
- Affinity spaces for faculty and staff provided
- Student designed and led Environmental Day in Upper School
- Student designed and led Womens'/Girls' Retreat in Upper and Middle Schools

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

CLARIFY BRECK'S VISION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND HOW THIS LIVES IN PRACTICE

Clarify Breck's vision on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, aligning with Breck's Mission & Values as well as our outcome statement. Breck's leaders will clarify who Breck is, and isn't, both in stated commitments and practice.

CLARIFY BRECK'S VISION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND HOW THIS LIVES IN PRACTICE



Action #1: Cultivate a shared understanding of existing DEI commitments in our policy and practice among all community members.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Develop action plan to update Breck's history page on website, which will allow visitors to gain a deeper understanding of Breck's history and its commitment to DEI
- Develop strategic communication plans for sharing and reflecting DEI commitments throughout the school year
- Develop and execute common framework for honoring, celebrating, and/or acknowledging Breck students/families as part of nationwide awareness months/days
- Partner with Parents Association Parents for Belonging committee to feature student programming and classroom lessons throughout the school year

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Begin to develop a multimedia Land Acknowledgment, including the history of the land owned by Breck
- Continue updates of DEI webpage, including our DEI commitments and updates of DEI events and news around campus
- Create philosophy for DEI representation in Breck's marketing and communications materials
- Review student/family handbook photo and media waiver to ensure it incorporates philosophy for DEI representation
- Review Breck DEI website with all stakeholder groups and incorporate input for effective communication
- Provide school leaders and staff clear definitions of concepts and terms related to DEI policy and programs
- Solicit input from parents on effectiveness of communication efforts
- Revise "What it means to be an Episcopal School" section of the Breck website in order to communicate our missional commitment to DEI work

BY JULY

2022:

- Develop comprehensive land acknowledgment webpage that includes Breck history, current land, and resources
- Complete Breck's History webpage as a continuation of August goal
- Solicit input from students, staff, parents, alumni about DEI at Breck with lens for what is clear, what isn't, and design strategy for the following year
- Clarify Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice language on behalf of Breck

Action #2: Communicate to all community members the ways Breck promotes educational equity, including restorative practices, healthy identity development, anti-racism/anti-oppression learning and Breck's three-pronged approach of accountability, education, and restoration.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Hold annual training for Deans, Division Directors, Program Directors, Academic Leadership Team, Counselors, and Chaplains in educational equity that includes tangible skill development
- Create brand assets to support training and communication of Breck's three-pronged approach of accountability, education, and restoration
- Create communication plan for anti-discrimination policy

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Provide an update on these commitments in the State of School Address with tangible examples to increase community understanding
- Train Admissions tour ambassadors in DEI commitments and programing, providing talking points and support
- Assess presentations thus far and review and redesign for the second semester
- Continue implementation of presentations at divisional parent meetings and other community forums to share about DEI at Breck

BY JULY

2022:

- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year

Action #3: Review and update Breck's Mission and Values statement to accurately reflect DEI commitments.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- The Breck Head of School, in partnership with Board Chair, Board President, and the Board of Trustees, will outline a plan for reviewing Breck's Mission and Values

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Form a Board committee to review Breck's Mission and Values

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Redesign of Breck DEI webpage
- Development of Anti-Discrimination statement
- Development of Discourse with Dignity statement
- 100% Capacity building in educational equity of all Board of Trustees, DEI Committee, School Leaders, and Faculty

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

CLARIFY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES AND CREATE A CLEAR STRUCTURE OF DEI LEADERSHIP

Diversity, equity, and inclusion work is a responsibility shared by all school leaders, faculty, and staff. Dedicated resources and a clear structure of leadership is necessary to institutionalize our DEI work and achieve consistent implementation in all aspects of school life. For this work to be comprehensively integrated, the vision for DEI leadership will concurrently

1. Build DEI capacity for all employees,
2. Inspire collective ownership of these goals,
3. Provide clear guidance and expertise from specific school leaders.



CLARIFY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND CREATE A CLEAR STRUCTURE OF DEI LEADERSHIP

Action #1: Clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of DEI leadership in terms of strategy, vision, implementation, and support. This will include Program Directors, Division Directors, Deans, and additional leaders to be hired.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Clearly identify and outline the specific roles and responsibilities for Program Directors including the Director of Leadership and Equity at the Melrose Center, the Director of Community Life, and the Director of the Peter Clark Center for Mind, Brain, and Education

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Clearly identify and outline specific DEI roles and responsibilities for Deans and Division Directors
- Update website with personnel roles and responsibilities, clearly designating these specific roles and responsibilities.
- Share and clarify roles and responsibilities to all community members

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Reflect on, evaluate, and adapt the implementation of the roles and responsibilities regarding DEI as implemented in the 2021-2022 school year, as needed

Action #2: Hire a Director of Leadership and Equity at the Melrose Center and a Dean of Equity, both with professional experience in educational equity.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Develop job description and hire DEI leaders for Fall 2021
- Integrate new roles into leadership teams, including Senior Leadership Team and Academic Leadership Team

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Dean of Equity will meet with divisional faculty to learn where support is needed and to prioritize necessary actions and resources
- Visit respective affinity groups and student leadership group in corresponding divisions
- Collaborate with Divisional Chaplains for collaboration on Chapel gatherings
- Collaborate with Chaplains and Counselors for pastoral care and intentional support of students and families

BY JULY

2022:

- Reflect on and iterate the year in review in conjunction with the Director of Leadership and Equity and the Dean of Equity

Action #3: Professionalize the role of affinity space leaders.

BY SEPTEMBER

2021:

- Write job description that outlines expectations and responsibilities for affinity group leaders
- Establish compensation guidelines
- Begin compensating affinity group leaders and providing clear guidelines within DEI leadership structure

BY JANUARY

2022:

- Review the roles and responsibilities of affinity group leaders to determine what additional support is needed and any other adjustments for following year

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Continued development of Program Director leadership structure
- Formation of Core Team

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

CONTINUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

School Leadership and faculty are responsible for creating classroom climates and a school culture where all students feel they belong and can equitably thrive. Teaching and learning rely fundamentally on the quality of the teacher-student relationship as well as the teacher's ability to identify bias, oppression, and inequity. The student-teacher-family relationship is inherently intercultural and requires specific skills and abilities in order to provide an equitable school experience.

Breck will be a leader in offering professional development that is informed by research and the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices, anti-bias, anti-racist, anti-oppressive classrooms, intercultural competence, equity literacy, etc. We expect our learning community to be critical consumers of the best practices for justice, equity, diversity, belonging, and inclusion in schools. We also believe that it takes a village for our Breck community to be a space that counters prejudice and discrimination. For that reason, these professional development activities will also be available and accessible to the parent community.

CONTINUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DIVERSITY, QUILTY, AND INCLUSION

Action #1: Cultivate school leaders and teachers who are equity literate, actively countering inequity and cultivating equity in their spheres of influence.



**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Invite EnGenderEd to offer training to the Academic Leadership Team on Equity Literacy
- Introduce/Read *Grading for Equity* and review Breck data points for consideration
- Determine what academic performance data is collected school wide and in individual departments, and consider how to confirm equitable grading practices in all academic areas
- Introduce instructional faculty to Equity Literacy model via departments
- Offer introduction to Equity Literacy to Deans, Counselors, Chaplains, and other school leaders for implementation in their spheres of influence
- Create student focus groups for EnGenderEd research to take place in the first semester
- Facilitate faculty summer reading book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, with a focus on five excerpts and the concept of multiple ways of knowing
- Present DEI frames to further focus on identity/behavior, intent/impact, and certainty/curiosity for all faculty and staff
- Present DEI-led frames to further attention/discussion on identify/behavior, intent/impact, etc.
- Develop strategic incorporation of Equity Literacy, Grading for Equity, and Discourse with Dignity fur faculty Professional Development with next steps to be implemented by departments

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Conduct EnGenderEd focus groups
- Share findings of focus groups with Academic Leadership Team
- Share findings of focus groups with all faculty
- Incorporate findings into the curriculum review process
- Feature examples of equitable grading practices being used in classrooms and compare to relevant data points of patterns of inequity
- Schedule visit to Bdote retreat for all faculty and create other experiential learning opportunities for deepening understanding of Indigeneity

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Introduce standards and benchmarks for overall curriculum review incorporating equitable practices for 2022-2023 school year
- Identify capacity building opportunities for the following school year that include students, faculty, parents, and school leaders

Action #2: Connect all professional learning opportunities to DEI, focusing on concrete skill development that moves beyond recognition and into confident responsiveness.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Organize Critical Friends Groups for collegial accountability and support, with the option of identity-based groups
- Faculty and school leaders develop DEI learning goals around the curriculum redesign focus.

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Administrators and faculty share DEI learning goals with Critical Friends Groups
- Read EnGenderED's Developing Equity Literacy: A Reading Guide and discuss in departments
- Gather examples of DEI rubrics of adult skill development based on resources from NAIS and other independent schools including Equity Literacy.

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Evaluate DEI rubrics of adult skill development and develop into Breck model
- School leaders and faculty share their documented progress of the DEI learning goals

Action #3: Partner with Parents Association Parents for Belonging to develop meaningful and relevant learning experiences for parents/ caregivers that share Breck's DEI efforts and provide capacity building for this stakeholder group.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Create a plan for meetings and gatherings that incorporates Breck current DEI programming and priorities
- Clarify pathways to hear parent feedback, questions, and concerns related to lived experiences, identity development, and curriculum
- Partner with Work Beyond the Work to align practices of programming offered by the Parents Association Parents for Belonging
- Work in partnership with the Director of Leadership and Equity and the other Program Directors to align and collaborate on educational opportunities for parents and caregivers.

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Facilitate new meeting/gathering format and focus, communicating more consistently to the parent community and asking for feedback throughout the year.

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Present to Program Directors the successes and areas of growth for newly-formatted programming

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Training in anti-racism/anti-oppression frameworks for 100% of faculty
- Training in educational equity for all leadership groups, i.e., Board of Trustees, DEI Committee, Academic Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team, Parents Association Leadership Board, and Parents/Caregivers
- Development of DEI learning goals as a component of the evaluation process for faculty
- Training in Coaching for Equity for Academic and Senior Leadership Teams.

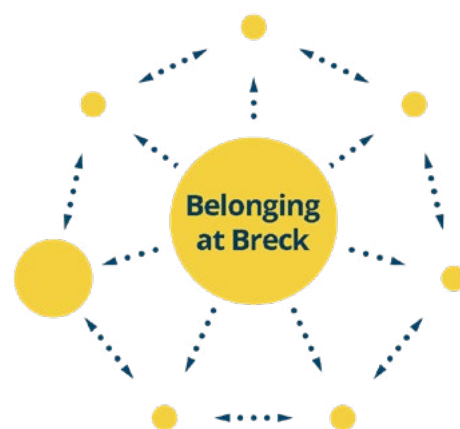
COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

STRATEGICALLY EVALUATE OUR PRACTICES

As Breck continues to deepen commitments to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work, continued evaluation and review of day-to-day practices is critical. While several areas of school life were shared by community members, we have identified three areas listed below as our strategic next steps. We are starting with Admissions, College Counseling, and Human Resources as they contribute significantly to the culture and climate of the School.

STRATEGICALLY EVALUATE OUR PRACTICES

Action #1: Review Admissions process for equity, aligning practice so appropriate scaffolding for all students to thrive, and laying the groundwork for similar models in other sectors.



BY SEPTEMBER 2021:

- Create a method for new families to self identify upon acceptance of admission, aligning and aggregating the data with Veracross
- Identify and schedule capacity building in the area of anti-bias work that is specific to independent school admissions including interviewing methodology, the role of financial aid, the decision making process, and the role of testing for admissions

BY JANUARY 2022:

- Consolidate attrition and retention patterns reflective of identity groups including diversity of race, gender, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, religion, etc., and share with Division Directors, Program Directors, and Head of School completed throughout the year
- Link self identification inquiry to the re-enrollment process allowing for families to self identify as they see fit
- Collaborate with the Director of Leadership & Equity and other school leaders on admissions tours, community events, open houses, and other admissions and practices
- Schedule training for the admission team in best practices in interviewing, both in individual and group model, recognizing and combating bias in the admissions process
- Begin to redesign the entry process for new students working toward a structured entry in the first year for students and families

BY JULY 2022:

- Evaluate the current model and distribution of tutoring money and how to increase access for July and August tutoring as well as entry support
- Establish the redesign entry process for new students for a scaffolded and structured entry in your first year to be implemented August 2022
- Present admissions process adaptations to Senior Leadership Team for implementation in 2022-2023 school year

Action #2: Identify areas for improving equity of the college counseling process, aligning practice with appropriate scaffolding for all students to thrive, laying the groundwork for similar models in other sectors. Review P-12 cultural and curricular alignment as it impacts College Counseling practices. Our work should meet the following three goals:

1. Educate the community about the college process and outcomes
2. Identify the crucial nexus points of the P-12 experience and understand how they impact college outcomes
3. Review our academic measures and consider how to best capture non-tangibles, specifically intellectual curiosity, self knowledge, and social responsibility

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Determine the academic factors that contribute to a student being in the top 20% of the class
- Identify 2-3 specific processes, practices, and policies that negatively impact these contributing factors
- Begin creating a database and oversight team to track student progress P-12
- Utilize readings and resources on how bias influences the college counseling process

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Collaborate with Division Directors and Deans to review course placements for BIPOC and financial aid families,
- Begin to work with equity resources/consultants to identify best practices for an anti-bias approach that adequately provides counseling to individual students and families — one centered on relationships, who the student is, what they need to thrive in the transition to college
- Present the connection between student academic performance and college outcomes and financial aid to SLT, ALT and Upper School administration
- Review facilitation of student communication (essays, biographies, interview skills, etc.) to strengthen self-expression and representation of each student's strengths, passions, and talents
- Begin strategic planning to support recommendation writing, and establish partners to prepare for spring training.

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Review course placements for BIPOC and financial aid families, building pathways to work towards equity in Advanced Research and AP courses, student athletic opportunities, and community leadership
- Establish a working group to create a survey and structure to evaluate student preparedness for college
- Identify and schedule capacity building in anti-bias work for college counseling, facilitating student communication of who they are, and recommendation writing practices
- Develop ways to connect recent alumni of color with current students for the college transition
- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year

Action #3: RECRUITMENT: Review hiring practices and continue commitment to hiring a diverse faculty and staff across the school.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Gather data on hiring diverse faculty and staff across multiple aspects of identity, including data metrics
- Develop paperwork for new hires that allows for all employees to self identify as a part of employment on-boarding
- Synchronize self identification categories for all employees with Veracross
- Begin a partnership with EnGenderED on hiring and retention strategies and best practices

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Co-develop with EnGenderED a training for all those with hiring responsibilities on best practices and strategies for hiring employees of diverse backgrounds
- Determine which job fairs Breck will attend and/or host, utilizing community members as thought partners and ambassadors.

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Share data on effectiveness of recruitment efforts, takeaways and recommendations for the following year with the Senior Leadership Team

Action #4: RETENTION: Continued review of school culture and support structures in order to facilitate healthy retention of faculty and staff of all backgrounds.

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Gather and aggregate the data on why people leave from exit interviews
- Examine our on-boarding process and its effectiveness, making adjustments to the mentorship model prior to the start of the school year
- Schedule two or three check-in opportunities for individuals to provide feedback on how their year is going to take place throughout the school year

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Continue partnership with EnGenderED as an equity resource
- Facilitate first check-in sessions with all new employees
- Present trends and patterns from exit interview data to the Senior Leadership Team
- Begin designing the support structures for implementation in the first year of employment
- Develop a survey on school climate and employee satisfaction to anonymously determine where cultural norms are not welcoming
- Begin discussing possible intervention strategies for when we hear an employee is dissatisfied

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Make recommendations for a strong mentor program for implementation in the 2022-2023 school year
- From the exit interview data, partnership with EnGenderED, and climate/employee satisfaction survey, make recommended changes to hiring, on-boarding, and school climate
- At the end of the first year of employment, review each individual employee and make recommendations for further support
- Examine the first year support system for faculty and staff and determine what adjustments are needed.

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Hiring of a Retention specialist as a part of the Admissions team
- Partnership with EnGenderEd to evaluate hiring practices and founding documents
- Capacity building in Anti-discrimination and Discourse with Dignity policies for school leadership including review of three pronged approach of accountability, education, restoration
- Training of the security team in an anti-bias framework
- Student led review of dress code in Upper School for 2021-2022 school year.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS:

REVIEW & ALIGN CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY, AND CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE WITH DEI PHILOSOPHY

Commit to pedagogy that centers critical thinking, a sense of belonging, diversity of thought, and results in equitable experiences and outcomes. This commitment includes additional training and capacity-building for educators in equity literacy, curriculum and pedagogy, as well as continued equity literacy for students, and parents. This pedagogical shift will:

1. Prioritize healthy relationships and discourse with dignity, fully honoring all voices
2. Embrace difference, resulting in all students feeling seen throughout the curriculum, classroom, and school experience
3. Name racism and systemic oppression that foster inequities
4. Teach about non-dominant cultures and identities through a strengths-based lens that broadens perspective
5. Honor intersectionality in conversations about identity development, privilege, and marginalization, holding the complexity of power and access

REVIEW & ALIGN CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY, AND CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE WITH DEI PHILOSOPHY

Action #1: Align curriculum with DEI philosophy as an integral part of Breck's curriculum review cycle, working with teachers to assess their curriculum and pedagogy with an increased focus on what, how, and why we teach.



BY SEPTEMBER 2021:

- Provide capacity building in curriculum review for Academic Leadership Team with EnGenderEd equity partner
- All faculty will review Pronoun & Gender Inclusion document at the start of the year in departments
- All faculty will review Discourse with Dignity document at the start of the year in departments.

BY JANUARY 2022:

- Instructional faculty will identify a lesson/unit or policy/practice to be reviewed and redesigned according to the Equity Literacy Framework
- EnGenderEd host student focus groups to better understand our curriculum, defined as content, pedagogy, and classroom experience, to inform future capacity building of faculty
- Develop guiding resources using Equity Literacy Framework for teachers to successfully document and review curriculum
- Begin to create evaluation for P-12 curriculum for teachers to ensure alignment with DEI philosophy as outlined above to be shared with faculty in June
- Feature three lessons/units that are examples of successful alignment with critical pedagogy and equity literacy, designed and taught by different teachers in each division and/or department.

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Each team member share the adaptation they made to their lesson/unit or policy/practice in a faculty showcase
- Share evaluation system for P-12 curriculum for teachers to ensure alignment with DEI philosophy
- Introduce standards and benchmarks for overall curriculum review incorporating DEI best practices for 2022-2023 school year
- Review all action steps as outlined above and reassess for the following year.

Action #2: Create and implement a PreK-12 curricular scope and sequence to foster healthy identity development in all students

**BY SEPTEMBER
2021:**

- Identify project leader and project team members to develop a scope and sequence

**BY JANUARY
2022:**

- Begin gathering multiple nationally-recognized healthy identity development curricula that do skill development aligned with critical pedagogy throughout the 2021-2022 school year, with a goal of deciding on a grade-level based curriculum to be integrated by PreK-12 classrooms and advisories
- Invite multiple classroom teachers/advisors to pilot classroom lessons in Lower/Middle School classrooms and Middle/Upper School advisories
- Schedule time to share feedback on effectiveness

**BY JULY
2022:**

- Review and evaluate the experience of varying identity curricular frame works in classrooms/advisories
- Develop an identity development curriculum scope and sequence for all PreK-12 classrooms and advisories for fall 2022
- Recommend steps toward implementation (training) for all PreK-12 faculty.

Completed in 2020-2021:

- Research on Identity Development Curricula started with inquiries to a variety of schools
- Training facilitated by Design Impact, "Grieving the Just World"
- DEI learning goal development for all faculty and school leaders by EnGenderED
- Pronoun and Gender Inclusion statement developed by English department accepted by Academic Leadership Team

A large group of graduates in black gowns are gathered on a green lawn, throwing their black mortarboard caps into the air. The caps are captured mid-flight, scattered across the upper half of the frame. In the background, a large, multi-story building with a prominent tower and many windows is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is celebratory and captures a key moment in a graduation ceremony.

LOOKING FORWARD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CORE TEAM:

Thank you to the following individuals for their time, efforts, and expertise for this critical work.



Frederique Schmidt
Community
Engagement



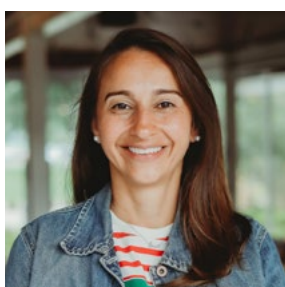
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Carolina Olaya
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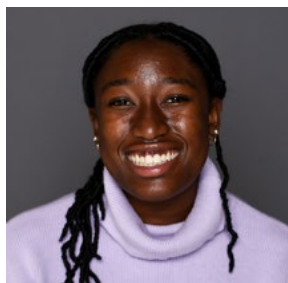
Kyle Parsons
Alumni Director



Nath Samaratunga
Class of 2014



Aida Strom
Breck Parent



Ayres Warren
Class of 2022



Danny Suggs
Class of 2022

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS:

Finally, thank you to the dozens of staff, families, alumni, and students who participated in the listening sessions and workshops. This work would not be possible without your energy, vulnerability, expertise, and enthusiasm.

CLOSING

A LETTER FROM DESIGN IMPACT:

We are thankful to the Breck community for embarking on this journey with us.

When we started this work in 2020, we knew there was much work to be done. But it was clear that Breck was up for the challenge. As we wrap up our chapter in Breck's journey, we wanted to share a few observations about how Breck showed up.

- **Strong Collaboration:** This work was led by a core team of student advocates, parent leaders, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators who were already championing equity. This intentionally diverse and inclusive group immediately took ownership of the work, rolling up their sleeves in deep partnership with Design Impact.
- **Centering relationships:** The core team paid acute attention to what Breck's community needed throughout the process, and responded quickly. The team initiated community-wide conversations and intimate meetings with students and staff to help meet people where they were. The core team also prioritized connection, centering, and healing as a team. By prioritizing relationships, they established trust and paved a path to sustain the work.
- **Amplifying what's working:** Breck developed many of their commitments on what was already working in the community. This focus helped validate critical work-in-progress, like student-led affinity groups and anti-bias curriculum. This strength-based approach helps create a strong foundation for the Community Commitments to take root.
- **Truth and Transparency:** DEI work often surfaces painful realities about how institutions can unintentionally create and perpetuate harm. Breck showed grace, resilience, and openness to hearing hard truths throughout this process. Breck's leadership and core team held space to process the stories this work revealed and shared findings broadly. By leaning into discomfort, they positioned the Community Commitments to address deep-seated needs, not performative or surface-level recommendations.

Throughout this year, we saw a level of thoughtfulness and engagement that is rare among even the most committed partners. Breck created space for this work across its community, which speaks to its sustained values around belonging and inclusion. We look forward to seeing the ways Breck will continue to grow against each of these Community Commitments and live into an authentic culture of belonging and inclusion.

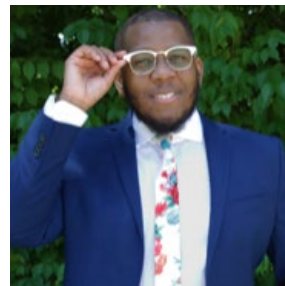
DESIGN IMPACT

Design Impact is a social innovation nonprofit that designs inclusive and creative approaches to complicated social problems. We combine design, social justice, and leadership practice to address pressing issues, equip communities, and inspire social change.

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