

May 26, 2022

Dear Wardlaw+Hartridge Community,

At a retreat last October, our Board of Trustees authorized the creation of a schoolwide Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee and charged it with two initial tasks. The first was to determine whether the school should create a statement that presents an overarching framework of school values related to DEIB at Wardlaw+Hartridge, and, if so, to draft such a statement for Board review. The second was to survey the community to gather as much data and as many perspectives as possible regarding DEIB at Wardlaw+Hartridge, and then to make any recommendations for changes in policies or practices to me and to the Board.

We invited anyone who was interested to nominate themselves for DEIB Committee service. Fifty people did so, including alumni, parents, faculty and staff, students, and teachers. Twenty-two were chosen, including representatives from all constituent groups, and three Board of Trustees members joined as well, bringing the Committee to 25 members.

Associate Head Dr. Crafton chaired the Committee, and they have met several times throughout the year to address the tasks before them. They have spent a great deal of time crafting two statements that are intended to extend, but not replace, the school's mission and core values statements, with a specific focus on how those latter statements apply to DEIB matters. At the most recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Board voted to approve the new statements, which accompany this letter. On behalf of our community, I want to express my gratitude to the Committee members for their time and the great care they have taken to draft statements that are true to the school's values and spirit.

The first is a DEIB vision statement that describes the inclusive nature of the community we aim to provide for everyone within our school community. The second is a DEIB mission statement that sets forth how our community acts to sustain the type of community described in the vision statement. The Wardlaw+Hartridge Mission and Core Values statements have served our school well since they were adopted in 2006 and have only been slightly refined over those years. These new DEIB statements are intended to align with the established schoolwide statements.



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The DEIB Committee has completed its survey and is in the process of analyzing the responses. Any recommendations for changes in policies or practices that flow from those responses will be presented to the administration and the Board in the summer or fall of this year. The survey process will be repeated three years from now.

Schools, corporations, and other organizations across the U.S. are in the midst of discussions about the nature of their communities and about ensuring fairness and providing a sense of belonging for all. We clearly embraced the twin goals of community and diversity in our mission and core values statements when they were created in 2006. We have strengths in these areas that most organizations cannot easily match. Our DEIB efforts are intended to enhance that advantage by committing to an intentional process of closer listening to the experiences of people of all backgrounds in our community and addressing any barriers we find to a clear sense of inclusion felt by all. We are doing so through an effort that includes representatives of all our constituent groups and that invites the voices of all in our community. This is by us, for us, and about us, and I am confident it will help strengthen our community.

With best regards,  
Andy Webster  
Head of School