



ANNUAL REPORT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION AT THE FREDERICK GUNN SCHOOL JUNE 2023

"We work intentionally to equip everyone in the community to navigate the generative tensions of a pluralistic boarding environment ... Both because new students and employees arrive each fall and because we are always learning, the work is always evolving."

During the course of the 2022–23 school year, we utilized the founder's vision to expand on two goals from the 2020 DEI Annual Report:

- Safeguard against exclusion and inequality in the student, staff, and faculty experience;
- Develop a diverse and pluralistic school community that becomes more wise, more engaged, and filled with more active citizens over time.

What the 2022–23 Annual Review will show is the levels of institutional involvement around the mission of DEI, and how The Frederick Gunn School has found ways to internalize the work through empowering roles to understand their significance in evoking Mr. Gunn's vision for schooling and education in all its forms.

Progress in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at The Frederick Gunn School

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

DEI has activated affinity groups, where the voices of students of specific identities are represented and supported by the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. Affinity group leaders are school leaders similar to a prefect or residential advisor. The affinity group space is where members of the community come together to understand their identity from the "I" perspective, while working on ways to amplify the inclusive elements of this leadership structure. This has given students the power of voice and guided students to develop their influence. Groups consist of the following identities:

- Abigail's Circle - Group for community members identifying as girls and women
- Asian Student Association - Group for students from the continent of Asia and domestic students of Asian Heritage
- Black & Latinx Union - Students of Black and/or Latinx heritage
- Crossroads - Faith-based safe space to discuss religion and religious thought
- Gender & Sexuality Alliance - Group for LGBTQ+ community members
- Judaic Society - Space for Jewish students to gather around faith and Jewish culture

- Gunn Global – Group for Students who attend FGS from beyond the United States and its territories
 - The leaders of these groups meet regularly throughout the year to acknowledge oneself in a community of like identities. The emphasis on leading these groups is to uplift oneself, but to also see, encourage, and uplift the other leaders to push through the challenges of typically marginalized groups on and off campus. These students are the voices of the traditionally unheard, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion intends to amplify these voices. The affinity groups are supported by faculty who advise the groups on meetings, discussions, and programming.
 - The commencing student leaders receive a stole as a gift from the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. The stole represents strong leadership characteristics, and shows commitment to the work necessary for student involvement in developing inclusive environments in the name of our abolitionist founders, Frederick and Abigail Gunn.

- The narrative that we're building around DEI is the inclusion of student and faculty voices in the development of the DEI program at Gunn. It matters that the students see adults modeling the inclusive characteristics that we, as faculty, ask students to embrace every day. We want to refrain from dissonance, and be the pillar of support and resemble what the students need to practice. With that being said, The Frederick Gunn School has made several strides in the positive direction in our program and in our strategy. The highlights of this work are explained in detail in this document.

- The Director of DEI, as a member of the CAIS Commission on Diversity in Independent Schools, co-led and facilitated the first in-person statewide Student Diversity Leadership Conference since spring 2019.

- The Director of DEI ran a faculty workshop on considering identity in interdepartmental ways. The 45-minute workshop served to define the philosophy of one's realms of influence.

- The Director of DEI and the Director of the Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy have been working together to establish a connection with the Children's Community School in Waterbury, Connecticut. In its current state, it is an outreach and volunteer opportunity for students and faculty members to work with kindergarten and middle school students during their after-school program.

Chief People Officer & Human Resources

We strive to be a community where each individual feels accepted and comfortable expressing who they are. We know that adults who feel welcome will bring openness and perspective that will benefit each other and our students.

As we continue to think about what it means to have a thriving community built by individuals who bring different lived experiences, we understand our responsibility is to provide education and space that fosters curiosity and reflection. We believe that if we provide our adults with an environment to ask questions and learn, they will in return have the language and tools to navigate these ever-changing, complex topics with our students. We continue to ask ourselves questions about what it means to be a member of this community and understand what people need to feel safe, secure, and supported. We equally understand the value in action. As a school that values Active Citizenship, we know that change happens when we commit to small, incremental, intentional acts. Below is a list of small steps we have made this school year:

- We launched an Employee Engagement Survey in the fall of 2022. This survey was sent out monthly to all employees, asking them questions in the categories of Belonging, Purpose, and Excellence. These results will be shared with the adult community in the month of June and the school will be asking for suggestions on how we can improve on the questions that had the lowest scores. The Senior Leadership Team will be reviewing the suggestions in the summer and appropriate changes will be made.
- For this hiring cycle, we took an intentional approach in terms of where we posted open positions. We created a list of over 200 agencies, including colleges and universities, publications, and other institutions that had a diverse population or served a diverse population. We reached out to this group during the fall to provide them with information about our school and a link to our open positions. At this time, we do not know if this communication was fruitful but we do plan on continuing to expand this list and reach out annually. As of this report, we have two individuals entering our community for the 2023-24 school year that identify with a minority group. In addition, we made a strategic commitment to ensure that all finalist candidates met with our Director of DEI.
- The school formally recognized Juneteenth as a holiday starting in the 2022-23 school year, giving employees the ability to celebrate in a way that makes sense for them.
- We started the 2022-23 school year with anti-bias training for all staff employees. With this training complete, we now have all employees trained on anti-bias. This training will continue for new employees as they enter into our community.

We will start the 2023-24 school year with an all-employee learning moment. Meg Bolger, a lead facilitator in social justice, will be teaching a session on Holding Space: A Generous Approach to Transform Conflict, Hard Conversations, and Political Disagreements.

Developments in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Through Leadership Programs

Athletics

- The Athletics Department recently completed the hiring process for two positions, an Assistant Athletic Director and a Strength & Conditioning Coach. In our process, we looked to attract a diverse slate of candidates to ensure that our office was able to be as inclusive to all members of the community as possible. We were very happy with the process and thrilled that we were able to accomplish our goal of diversifying our office through internal and external hiring. Both candidates will be joining our team in August.
- In May, the Athletic Director networked with leaders in the lacrosse community that he met at the Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) Junior Championships. The purpose of this reach out was to speak about diversity in the sport and to see how the Athletic Director could help influence more diversity here at school. The Athletic Director will be speaking with [Asher Nolting](#) in the coming weeks.
- The Arts and the Athletic departments have been working with the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and the Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy to coordinate an after-school volunteer outreach program with the Children's Community School of Waterbury, Connecticut.

Citizenship and Just Democracy

For students to become effective civic agents who seek to live in loving, inclusive, equitable, and diverse communities, they must be willing to ask difficult questions, engage in courageous conversations, and ponder the deeper meaning of their existence within our human community. The Center for Citizenship and Just Democracy (CJD) helps students identify and address life's deepest questions and truths in order that they become active citizens who willingly strive to build inclusive communities and networks. The citizenship curriculum and other programming introduces students to a diversity of perspectives and worldviews that helps students discover that life has meaning – and that each of their individual lives has purpose and significance. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, CJD has helped encourage students and faculty to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

- Gunn hosted the Rooted Research & Civic Changemakers Conference in April 2023, which included the following presentations:
 - *The Black Experience at The Frederick Gunn School, A Study of Coeducation at The Frederick Gunn School, Culture and Citizenship, The Fragility of Modern Democracy in France and*

*the United States., Women's Education During the Coed Period,
Addressing Summer Slide: Reducing Reading Loss Among Youth
Target Groups*

- The Gray Party ran meetings/events throughout the year championing civil political discourse on campus.
- Citizen Gunn students created [Force for Good](#) documentaries, creating compassion for issues like educational equity, climate change, and wealth inequality. Adopting a *Force for Good* mentality in our community and the world compels students to engage with difficult topics and identify societal injustices that require social entrepreneurial solutions that lead to innovation and human flourishing. Often documentary films are the lead change agents in cultivating compassion for a societal dilemma or problem.
- For this summer's CJD retreat, five faculty members will attend the Frontiers of Democracy Conference 2023 at the Jonathan M. Tisch School for Civic Life at Tufts University. The special theme of the conference is religious pluralism and its relationship to democracy in multiracial societies.

College Counseling

- In June 2022, the College Counseling Office hired a new Associate Director, Tyler Sheikh, who had previously served on the NESAC Coaches of Color Consortium (now the Jeff Brown and Larry Anderson Coaches of Color Consortium). As a continuing member of the consortium, Tyler's participation in bi-weekly Zoom meetings represents Gunn along with other leading academic institutions at the higher education and secondary education levels. Topics range from open conversation/professional development to special speakers highlighting ways to support students of color.
- Emily Abelson, Associate Director of College Counseling, has been a member of the New England Association for College Counseling (NEACAC) IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Education, and Access) Committee since the 2021-22 academic year. As a continuing member of the IDEA Committee, Emily has served on the Inclusive Policies and Practices and the Anti-Racist Collaborative sub-committees. In June 2022, Emily was an inaugural facilitator and planning member of the first Anti-Racist Collaborative held at the Kingswood Oxford School. This collaborative seeks to bring together a cohort of professionals in aiding the evolution of secondary and postsecondary relationships and supportive structures. They worked to center traditionally marginalized identities to better serve communities in the quest to dismantle barriers and systemic racism in the secondary and postsecondary education environments. Emily also serves as a committee member for the Inclusive

Policies and Practices subcommittee. This subcommittee collaborates with various NEACAC constituents and committees as they work towards more inclusivity within the association. Internally, she oversees our communications to make sure they are inclusive. As a member of the committee, she reviews the College Admissions and College Counseling Resource Guide to inform college counselors on inclusive policies and practices to develop and share best practices as we move towards the more virtual world.

Arts

- The Arts intrinsically and authentically encourage students to express themselves through both visual and performing mediums. Students are given the safe space to express themselves through art in both individual and collaborative settings.
- We are striving to have a more balanced enrollment between male-identifying and female-identifying students in all of our music ensembles and drama courses and productions.
- Musical and theatrical repertoire choices are intentional, and include diverse selections to represent as many cultures as possible.
- In our theatrical productions, gender plays a minimal role in part selection, allowing students access to more parts in both the fall play and winter musical.
- Our new Dance Team welcomes all students of all skill sets to participate, with hopes of building a true, inclusive dance program.
- Our music ensembles incorporate a curricular differentiated learning environment, allowing students of all abilities to participate. This is also the case in our drama, dance, and visual arts classes, but not as part of the course curriculum selection.

Outdoors

- The Outdoor Program seeks to provide a space where all students feel accepted, and all students have the opportunity to push their tolerance for risk. We are still in the beginning stages of realizing where we need to expand our programming to be more inclusive, and that is in part because not many students sign up for our programs. In that sense, we are still in progress, but our Director of Outdoor Programs continues to evaluate our programs to ensure that they are inclusive. I've been proud that our trips have been well attended by international students, young women, and students of color.

- We aspire to reach more male students, and particularly male students in leadership roles on campus.
- From a risk management and readiness perspective, we offer a variety of services to accommodate different physical abilities, from 30-minute nature walks on campus to multi-day backpacking trips.

Admissions & Enrollment

The Admissions Office continues to prioritize enrollment of a broadly representative student body. We are committed to previously implemented initiatives and have added enrollment initiatives as outlined below.

- Continue to incorporate a strategic enrollment priority focused on domestic students of color (SOC), specifically to meet or exceed new domestic SOC enrollment compared to the prior year. This goal was met for the 2022–23 school year.
- Continued work with community-based organizations (A Better Chance, SEEDS, Inspiring Young Minds) and other partners (Harlem Academy, consultants) to attract and enroll promising students.
- Hiring of a Director of Multicultural Recruitment, Associate Director of Admissions. This director's primary focus will be to steward and oversee relationships with existing partners as above and build relationships with additional organizations and partners that ensure the diversity of our student population.
- Creation of a database tracking subsets of diversity among our enrollment, both new and total enrollment, with year-over-year data. Initial subsets being tracked include gender, ethnicity, international, and full-pay vs. financial aid students. We will evaluate these subsets to identify trends and areas for improvement, then create workstreams as needed to further analyze and create action plans in subsets requiring improvement.
- Continue to award the Highlander Grant to students receiving more than 90% need-based aid to allow for greater equity of experience for these students. Components of the Highlander Grant include waiving non-tuition enrollment fees (boarding fee, health center fee, tech fee and dorm deposit), a book stipend, coverage of laundry service cost, and reduction of costs for fee-based activities, including but not limited to trips, prom, travel, and standardized and AP testing fees.

Alumni & Development

The Alumni & Development Office continues to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusivity, particularly in our alumni and parent engagement programs. Additionally, this year we also

identified ways to incorporate DEI into our fundraising efforts. Some of the outcomes of these initiatives include:

- Increased language that includes Abigail Gunn as Frederick Gunn's partner in the founding of our school;
- The addition of two alumnae to the Board of Trustees;
- An Alumnae Trustee Panel, facilitated via Zoom and shared via the website and the Bulletin, which highlighted women in volunteer leadership positions at the school and focused discussion on the lived experience of women who attended the school;
- An Alumni Career Day panel that consisted entirely of alumni who graduated within the last 10 years, included 75% alumnae, and was moderated by an alumnus of color;
- We removed the cost-barrier of the New York City holiday event by having it underwritten by a current parent/trustee;
- Discussed early-stage concepts for affinity-based parent programming;
- Restructured role: Marlon Fisher as the Associate Director of Next Generation Leadership
 - Prioritize increased engagement from our 20 most-recent graduating classes
 - Program events around networking and engagement for young alumni of the most recent 20 graduating class years
 - Continue significant function of evaluating fundraising and participation for the school;
- Melissa Regan as the Director of Engagement
 - Develop engagement programs for over 5,000+ alumni and 300+ parents and families
 - Build into connecting with an inclusive number of alumni to solidify outreach and engagement opportunities.

Board DEI Committee

- The Board's DEI Committee, chaired by Omar Slowe '97, continues to govern the school's DEI initiatives, including annual work by Trustees themselves.
- The Board's composition is more diverse, by any measure, than at any time in the school's history.
- The Board has encouraged policies to ensure that all vendors, including architects and construction managers, are as diverse as possible.

The tasks ahead of the school are largely based on supporting the culture of belonging that Mr. and Mrs. Gunn initiated, while also creating what it looks like for our current, and future, community members. We have become a place that combines all the sum of our parts to establish the space Mr. Gunn could see and respect as the successor of his and Mrs. Gunn's mission, while also championing the continuous process of diverse, equitable, and inclusive education at The Frederick Gunn School.