



July 21, 2020

Dear Members of the Episcopal Collegiate School Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am excited to announce the co-chairs of our newly established, Board-driven Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Current Episcopal parent Dr. Christopher Jones and Board member Elizabeth (“Lizzie”) Phillips have enthusiastically agreed to lead this critical initiative. Dr. Jones is the Executive Director of the Arkansas Innovation Hub. In addition to being a nuclear engineer, he has dedicated years of his life working in the fields of entrepreneurship, economic development, and diversity. To learn more about Dr. Jones, [click here](#). Ms. Phillips currently serves as Chief Information Officer at Stephens Insurance. She has an extensive background in economic analysis and data science. To learn more about Ms. Phillips, [click here](#). Dr. Jones and Ms. Phillips bring a wealth of professional expertise and a high level of personal integrity to this initiative. They are committed to being proactive, collaborative, and transparent as Episcopal works to build a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable community.

To ensure every member of our community has an opportunity to participate in this ongoing effort, we are establishing three new Diversity Councils at Episcopal: an Alumni Diversity Council, a Parents’ Diversity Council, and a Faculty Diversity Council. These groups will work in tandem with the current Student Diversity Council founded in 2010 by faculty sponsor, Debbie Pettibone. Ms. Pettibone will oversee and facilitate coordination between the four groups. Members of each Diversity Council (student, parent, faculty, and alumni) will help select two representatives to serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Along with Board members and Head of School, David Perkinson, there will be three additional seats open for other Episcopal community members. The members of the Task Force will be shared publicly prior to our inaugural meeting on September 2, 2020.

Thank you to those who have already indicated an interest in this work through the previous "Join the Conversation" form or by email. We will be in touch with you

regarding next steps. If you are interested in joining the **Parents' Diversity Council** (Current and Alumni Parents), the **Alumni Diversity Council**, the **Faculty Diversity Council**, or the **Student Diversity Council** (Middle and Upper School Students), [click here](#).

The Board recognizes and appreciates the steps that our faculty and administration have already taken to cultivate a more diverse and inclusive environment at Episcopal. To build on this work, we have begun a search to bring in a nationally recognized diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to facilitate community dialogues and conduct a comprehensive climate and culture assessment. This will give community members an opportunity to share their experiences through listening sessions, in focus groups, and via an in-depth survey. The content that emerges from this research will guide future training for students, faculty, administration, and Board members. Additionally, the Task Force will also use this information to inform decisions around key changes we need to implement to become the kind of community we truly aspire to be. Dr. Jones and Ms. Phillips look forward to updating you in the coming weeks on our progress and next steps.

Thank you for joining us as we work to make Episcopal Collegiate School a stronger, safer, more responsive community where each member feels a genuine sense of acceptance and belonging.

Sincerely,
Joan Strauss
President, Board of Trustees