



June 13, 2020

Dear Members of the Episcopal Collegiate School Community,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the School's administration to express the profound sense of sadness and anger we feel at the horrific killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless others who have been victimized by the racial injustice and violence that plagues our nation.

As an institution of learning, we are obligated to educate our community about the unconscionable human and social costs of failing to eradicate bigotry. We do this against the somber backdrop of our overdue reckoning with issues of racism and biases, issues that Black Lives Matter has given voice and urgency to. We must demonstrate through our words and our deeds what it means to be a member of a truly inclusive community, one that embraces differences and values diversity.

While in recent years we have made important strides to create an environment that better reflects and celebrates the multicultural world in which we live, the events of recent weeks have revealed shortcomings in our efforts.

We know that we must continue our existing initiatives to attract a more diverse faculty and staff, which since 2017 has included actively participating in prominent minority hiring events and partnering with an outside firm that specializes in recruiting people of color. Simultaneously, we must maintain our commitment to aggressively seeking out exceptional young people who will further diversify our student body and bring valuable insights and perspectives to our community.

We also recognize we must do more. Immediately, the Board of Trustees has committed to providing diversity and inclusion training for administration, faculty, staff, Board of Trustees, and students when the academic year begins. Transparency and accountability must serve as the foundation of all our efforts moving forward. We have also established [a link to a dedicated page](#) on our website where you can join our conversation. We encourage and welcome your dialogue and feedback.

Furthermore, the Board moved earlier today to establish a Board-driven Diversity and Inclusion Task Force comprised of racially diverse students, alumni, family members, former and current board members as well as members of the School's leadership team. I look forward to updating the School community once the Task Force membership is finalized. The Task Force will review the School's current policies and processes for implicit bias and recommend any needed changes. Additionally, the Task Force will identify measurable short-and long-term objectives that will shape a permanent Diversity and Inclusion program.

In developing these goals, the Task Force will solicit input from the broader school community to ensure all voices can be heard. Members of the Task Force will also oversee ongoing efforts to achieve approved objectives and make programmatic recommendations to School leadership as appropriate.

At the conclusion of each academic year, the Task Force will produce and issue a report to the School community examining the institution's progress to date and identifying resources that may be necessary to achieve long-term goals. This enhanced transparency and accountability will ensure that we meet our obligation to provide a learning environment based on inclusion, equity and justice.

In the meantime, thank you for your continued support of Episcopal Collegiate School. Now more than ever, your dedication to our shared mission and values serves to strengthen the institution and benefit every member of our community.

Sincerely,

Joan Strauss
President, Board of Trustees

Jackson T. Stephens Campus

1701 Cantrell Road · Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 · 501.372.1194 · Fax: 501.373.2160