

## **Response to Cyclones for Change June 18, 2020**

Dear Alumni,

Thank you for your well-written letter and passionate concern. We are listening and your voices are heard. Porter-Gaud continues to be committed to attaining a more diverse and inclusive school community. Indeed, increasing the school's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") with respect to its student body and faculty is one of the components and goals of the school's current Strategic Plan and will continue to be in the school's new Strategic Plan currently being developed.

### **What We are Doing Now**

Your letter raises many excellent ideas, most of which are, and have been, well-underway, and Porter-Gaud has made significant progress in several areas. A few examples include:

- \$2.4 million awarded in financial aid for the 2020-21 academic year, supporting 25% of the student body.
- 25 named diversity scholarships including the creation of the Equity and Inclusion Fund in 2018, BroadReach Scholarship, and the Middleton Scholarships in 2017.
- Since 2015, we have partnered with Meeting Street Academy to bring more diverse students to Porter-Gaud. The MSA Scholars program supports an additional student each year.
- DEI programming in Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School classrooms. Topics include social justice, microaggressions, white privilege, unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion, bullying, stereotypes, and prejudice.
- Restructuring of the English curriculum to include more diverse perspectives including people of color and women authors.
- Diversity and Inclusion Parent Alliance (DIPA), formed in 2016, hosts monthly parent education coffees and dialogues.
- SCISA's new leadership has launched several significant initiatives in the last three years to bolster its commitment to diversity and inclusion. They established a board level committee for diversity work, updated their bylaws and no tolerance policies in athletics and hosted nine dedicated workshops and conferences for school leaders, faculty, and students. In 2019, SCISA elected its first African-American president, Dr. Tonya Houston.

Importantly, over the past 15 years, Porter-Gaud has doubled the percentage of students of color on campus (currently 12.5%). We recognize we have more work to do to close the gap between our DEI aspirations and reality. Therefore, we will expand our efforts to make this a top priority.

### **What We are Committed to Doing Next**

DEI initiatives are major components of the school's new 2020 Strategic Plan, which will guide the direction of the school for years to come. Our next steps are to set accountable goals and action steps this summer and upcoming school year for several meaningful DEI initiatives, including:

- Identify, recruit, and retain racially and ethnically diverse faculty and administrators across all divisions of the school.
- Develop and implement programs across all areas of the school that increase our capacity to understand, appreciate, and include the diverse individuals and perspectives within our school and local community, including anti-racism, identity, and social justice programming.
- Allocate the financial resources to allow us to enroll students who will be best served by a Porter-Gaud education and contribute most to the Porter-Gaud community, regardless of their family's ability to pay, and ensure that all children have access to the full Porter-Gaud experience.
- Conduct diversity training starting with the Board and current PG community this summer and fall.

### **How You Can Get Involved - A Call to Action for All**

We are delighted that so many of you and other alumni are so passionate about this issue and willing to partner with us on these critical initiatives. As follows are several ways for you all (and others) to get involved and demonstrate your commitment:

- **Zoom Meeting to Listen, Share Ideas, and Engage with our DEI team**
  - Interested alumni are invited to continue these conversations and contribute their voices on Monday, July 6 at 12:00 pm EST and/or Thursday, July 9 at 6:30 pm EST. [Please use this link to RSVP.](#) A meeting link will be sent to you.
- **DEI and Alumni Speaker Series for PG Community in 2020-2021**
  - Hosted by Diversity & Inclusion Parent Alliance and PG DEI team
  - Submit speaker ideas or express your interest in coming to campus to meet with students/fac/staff and parents. [Please submit names and ideas here.](#)
- **Financial Engagement:** Several of the school's DEI initiatives and efforts require significant funding and cannot be accomplished without it. Tuition alone is unable to provide the resources for all our initiatives. One way for you to demonstrate your passion for, and commitment to, increasing the school's DEI efforts is through financial support. Financial contributions set an example for all Porter-Gaud alumni and current members of the school community and would enable the school to make significant progress in these areas. Here are three ways to contribute financially:
  - **The Middleton Scholarship** ([www.portergaud.edu/give](http://www.portergaud.edu/give)) was established in 2017 by Khris Middleton '09 and aims to increase diversity at Porter-Gaud by awarding scholarships to high achieving underserved and minority students.
  - **The Equity and Inclusion Endowed Fund** ([www.portergaud.edu/give](http://www.portergaud.edu/give)) ensures that every child that attends Porter-Gaud has access to the full PG experience. The Fund contributes to new uniforms, tutoring, class trips and field trips, club and academic programs such as Youth In Government or Model UN, and extended day.
  - **Contact Craig Stewart** at [cstewart@portergaud.edu](mailto:cstewart@portergaud.edu) or (843) 402-4690 in the Porter-Gaud Foundation to discuss how you may help fund diversity efforts at the School.

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us. We value your input and participation with this crucial diversity, equity, and inclusion work. As an Episcopal School, we are called to love everyone as children of God and respond to the needs of our society. Thank you for your time, commitment, and passion for making Porter-Gaud a better place.

With gratitude,

D. DuBose Egleston, Jr. '93, Head of School

J. Walker Coleman, IV. '82 Chair, Board of Trustees