

Areas of focus transcript

Hiring faculty of color

Felicia Wilks: Hi everyone, my name is Felicia Wilks and I am the Upper School director and assistant head of school.

Sara Skinner: And I am Sara Skinner. I am the director of human resources.

Felicia Wilks: We're excited to talk to you about the ways that we are interrogating our current practices in hiring and retention through an anti-bias lens and a DEI mindset. In doing so, we hope to identify areas where we can be more inclusive of a wider range of diverse candidates. Our ultimate goal is to diversify our faculty and staff to ensure we are both building a community where students see themselves in the adults on campus and where everyone feels seen, heard, and included.

Sara Skinner: Some of the ways that we're doing that is to continue to educate all employees who are involved in our hiring process on examining our biases and how that informs our interactions with candidates and fellow employees. Other things we're looking at are examining our expectations and the cultural norms to ensure that we are both attracting and welcoming a wide variety of candidates. We're also looking at strengthening our internal outreach and mentoring, particularly for our employees of color, so that the individuals we welcome into our community feel like they have found a home.

Transforming the curriculum and our ways of teaching

Hans de Grys: Hi, I'm Hans de Grys. I'm one of the assistant directors at the Upper School and the 5-12 academic dean.

Debbie Bensadon: Hi, I'm Debbie Bensadon. I'm the assistant director of equity and inclusion and a Spanish teacher at the Upper School.

Hans de Grys: I'm really looking forward to working with Debbie this year and continuing our work together on diversity, equity, inclusion. A priority for us this year is to use our equity and inclusion mindset to evaluate and update our 5-12 curriculum and academic program in a really thoughtful and intentional way.

Debbie Bensadon: An equity and inclusion mindset in curriculum is a set of practices that we use to inform what we teach, how we teach, and how we measure our students' progress and growth. In this curriculum work, we will focus on how we teach about different experiences and voices with an emphasis on systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Hans de Grys: We hope that our efforts will help students understand different perspectives and systems, and also feel empowered to make positive changes in our community and in our world.

Formalizing a system of DEI feedback and support in employee evaluations

Reem Abu Rahmeh: Hi, my name is Reem Abu Rahmeh and I am the director of the Middle School.

Birage Tandon: Hello, I'm Birage Tandon and I am assistant head of school and chief financial officer. The purpose of our committee is to look at employee oversight. This work begins right from the moment that employees are hired.

Reem Abu Rahmeh: So, we are looking at three main areas: the learning and training piece, the community culture piece, and the policies and systems that underlie the work that we do.

Birage Tandon: The steps in front of us right now are to review the policies and systems of evaluation that are currently in place through an anti-racist lens to determine or identify where there may be biases, missed opportunities, or any gaps. Number two, to create ways to provide support for faculty and staff through ongoing training and professional development, with the focus on strengthening retention of faculty of color.

Reem Abu Rahmeh: In addition, we are thinking about ways to create and grow a culture of growth and feedback within our faculty and staff where we can increase community connections, safe spaces for dialogue, and ways for open and supported communication. We are also looking at providing clarity on channels of safe reporting when microaggressions and other issues arise.

Birage Tandon: Our goal and our hope is that our work will result in all employees, whether from the majority or minority groups, to feel a sense of belonging and the ability to bring their whole selves to the Lakeside community.

Revamping the student discipline system

Betty Benson: Hi, my name is Betty Benson and I am one of the Upper School assistant directors.

Robert Blackwell: Hello, my name is Robert Blackwell and I am the Middle School assistant director.

Betty Benson: Robert and I have embarked on employing a diversity, equity, and inclusion mindset to audit our discipline practices, policies, advisory programs, and community expectations.

Robert Blackwell: Our goal is to ensure that our policies, practices, and external and internal communications are in full alignment with our mission, and foster interactions that enable all voices in our community to be heard, especially those that have historically been marginalized.

Betty Benson: We are gathering a team of consultants with expertise in various areas, for example communications, restorative justice practices with adolescents, criminal justice practices with juveniles and adolescents, as well as those with expertise in fostering a diversity, equity, and inclusion mindset among teens. We're gathering these consultants to aid us in our audit of our discipline practices and policies.

Robert Blackwell: We have included consultants who are current members of the Lakeside community and consultants who work outside of the Lakeside community because we understand the importance

of exploring avenues outside of Lakeside's walls to broaden our perspective and deepen our understanding of where our challenges and opportunities for growth may lay.

Betty Benson: While Robert and I are uncertain of the shape our resulting efforts may take, we fully believe that this work will be paramount in furthering the growth of our believed Lakeside community towards being in more complete alignment with our mission and values.