

Widening the Lens

The Far Brook School Diversity Conference

HEAD OF SCHOOL CONSTITUENT GROUP CONVERSATION STARTERS

ANTI-RACISM QUOTES

Since the wider sense of community for all students and adults is compromised when racism is left unexamined, conversations on race and racism should be held across and among the various constituencies in the school community. Talking about race and racism is not something only black people and other people of color should do. While interracial dialogue that directly addresses race, racism, and privilege may be difficult to engage in, it is necessary that these conversations take place.

- Edith G. Arrington, Diane M. Hall, and Howard C. Stevenson
"The Success of African American Students in Independent Schools"

The truth of the matter is, when you commit yourself to Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism (ABAR), you're in it for the long uphill battle. Prioritizing ABAR is not comfortable. Mistakes will be made. Parents and caregivers may complain. Some staff members may leave. It is unrealistic to expect that your school will get it right at the first try. At the end of the day, it is our job to center our students, and that means improving ourselves to set the example for the world they will inherit.

-Liz Kleinrock, *Teaching Tolerance Magazine*
"AntiRacist Work in Schools: Are you in it for the Long Haul?"

Racism "can be seen in the collusion of laughing when a racist joke is told, or letting exclusionary hiring practices go unchallenged, of accepting as appropriate the omissions of people of color from the curriculum, and of avoiding difficult race-related issues."

-Beverly Daniel Tatum
Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?

Independent schools sing the praises of diversity and inclusion, but not all of them actually do the work of making their schools diverse and inclusive. For many schools, the first step toward action is recognizing how a history of exclusion has contributed to the school's culture—and then doing the work of changing that culture.

-Phillip McAdoo, *Independent School Magazine*
"What Does It Take to Be Truly Inclusive?"

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#Blackat INSTAGRAM POSTS

“_____ the school psychologist was one of my best friends at _____. I would not have made it out if it were not for her. There were countless times I’ve broken down and cried in her office and she reminded me of my strength. She made us feel like we were sane, we were beautiful, and that we had a purpose.”

#Affirmation

Standing year after year at the founder’s day ceremony with a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach having to “honor” _____, a slave owner, knowing that not one school leader or teacher would speak up or act out of empathy and compassion to support or protect Black students from this offensive, painful and traumatic spectacle. As black students, kids really, we knew we were all we had.

#Traditions

#Trauma

#Belonging

“A white high school student would do impressions of African tongue clicks at the black security guards when he would walk in and out of the school. He’d run away laughing. They had to just stand there. He never faced any consequence for this repeated action.”

#Dehumanizing

#Consequences

#Institutional Expectations

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QUESTIONS

Question 1: What has changed for you since the events of the spring and summer.

Question 2: What steps must Heads of School take to ensure that anti-racism is a shared value at your school?

Question 3: How must school traditions be reevaluated or re-imagined in light of new commitments to diversity and inclusion or anti-racism?

Question 4: Is the school's commitment to anti-racism evident to current and prospective families. Is it codified in school communications such as a diversity or anti-racism statement?

Questions 5: Is anti-racism professional development required for teachers, staff, and trustees? Is it strongly encouraged for families?

Question 6: Consequences for racist behavior is inconsistent in independent schools. How can Heads of School ensure that racist incidents do not go unchallenged and that offenders, whether unwitting or intentional, learn from the school's response, and change their behavior?

Question 7: How can Heads of School use their position of leadership to "bring along" the resistant or members of your community? Is this an important objective?