



**THE  
MOUNT  
VERNON  
SCHOOL**

**August 16, 2020**

July, 2020

Dear Mount Vernon Community,

Anchored in Christian values – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – relationships at Mount Vernon are foundational to learning. Preparing students to be college ready, globally competitive, and engaged citizen leaders call us to lean in to inclusion, diversity, equity, and action.

Creating and cultivating connections between all people, ideas, and sectors, the School welcomes all learners to wrestle with voices and perspectives that challenge our assumptions, biases, stereotypes, and privileges. Not allowing our differences to divide us requires each of us to engage in honest, vulnerable, and courageous conversations through empathy, reflection, examination, and action. Being real agents of change is a continuous journey.

Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, our trust in each other strengthens our sense of identity, autonomy, and interdependence. As a school of inquiry, innovation, and impact, we are committed to creating and sustaining a school culture where all members feel valued and safe, sharing their authentic selves to design a better world...together.

-IDEA Statement: Inclusion Diversity Equity & Action (Adopted 2018-2019)

Mount Vernon began in 2018 to have courageous conversations around the most challenging issues of our day, including diversity, equity, and inclusion. Engaging in race and other complex topics, the collaboration of teachers and students throughout the School has been fruitful and impactful. From the anti-bias curriculum focus to the schoolwide partnership with the Center for Civil and Human Rights, the School has taken incremental, deliberate steps to advance IDEA (IDEA Expressions of Learning, 2018-2020).

The School, during the summer months, has been listening and learning as past and current members of the Black community have been sharing their stories of pain. Feeling safe to come forward, we have been humbled by the vulnerability and strength it has taken to share these experiences. As a school community, we grieve and stand with members of the Black community to unearth and eradicate systems, processes, as well as the behavior of tearing people down with words and actions of racism and prejudice.

Acknowledging failures, missed opportunities, and gaps while building upon the previous steps taken, much work is still to be accomplished. We must seize the moment to effect change. We must cultivate a community of endurance to sustain the long journey of anti-racism. We must start from where we are, understand where we are, and as a result, the School has been examining tangible ways to build a more inclusive future. Therefore, we want to continue to hear from you. Welcoming every voice, please share your experiences, recommendations, and feedback by emailing [idea@mountvernon.school.org](mailto:idea@mountvernon.school.org).

Over the next 100 days, the School, with the support and expertise of external partners, is committed to the following action items:

1. Begin inclusion, diversity, and equity assessment led by an external partner, engaging with Black alumni and parents as well as current students, parents, and staff of color to amplify their voices within the Mount Vernon community
2. Expand Student Code of Conduct to combat and eradicate words of racism and acts of prejudice by developing Expressions, Language & Acts of Racism policy  
[Reported: August 16, 2020 Community Weekly Update](#)
3. Establish an anti-bias and anti-racism framework for students, faculty and staff, and administrators through the School's Professional Learning Program
4. Form a committee of diverse representation to design and develop an affinity group program
5. Relaunch 2019-2020 marketing audit through the IDEA lens and develop strategy to attract families of color to meet and

**Lower Campus** - 471 Mount Vernon HWY NE

**Upper Campus** - 510 Mount Vernon HWY NE

Atlanta, Ga 30328 | 404.252.3448

[mountvernon.school.org](http://mountvernon.school.org)

exceed diversity goals

6. Identify four inclusion and diversity coordinators, representing each of the four divisions (PS, LS, MS, US), to increase diverse representation for curricular and instructional advancement within the School as well as to provide greater support for families of color
7. Launch national search for Chief of Inclusion Diversity Equity & Action, reporting directly to the Head of School as a member of the senior leadership team
8. Refocus Parent University to provide specific parent programs for inclusion, diversity, and equity
9. Realign counseling services to provide additional support for social-emotional health of students and staff members of color  
[Reported: August 16, 2020 Community Weekly Update](#)
10. Commit 20% of The Mount Vernon Fund to support inclusion, diversity, and equity initiatives  
[Reported: August 16, 2020 Community Weekly Update](#)
11. Design a new IDEA site on the School's website to amplify action steps, resources, and progress  
[Reported: August 16, 2020 Community Weekly Update](#)

In addition, The Mount Vernon School has established short-term objectives, mid-term priorities, and long-term goals to advance and sustain inclusion, diversity, equity, and action.

- Organizational & School Climate Action Steps
- Learning & Well-Being Action Steps
- Recruitment & Retention Action Steps
- Advancement & Continuous Improvement Action Steps

Accomplishing these action steps will require collective conviction, leaning in together to set a course of bold ideas and approaches to address race and racism within our own community. While we cannot solve the complexities in other school communities, we can focus on Mount Vernon.

And when we do, we will empower all people, regardless of identity and background, to realize their full potential, engage meaningfully in life, and leave at the end of each day with their humanity fully intact.

Dr. Brett Jacobsen  
CEO and Head of School