



August 24, 2020

Dear Middlesex Community,

The Middlesex Board of Trustees has been meeting regularly throughout the summer to address the reality of racism in American society, and the concrete and imperative ways that our school community can “do better.” As David Beare wrote in his [June 11 letter](#), the Board has formed a new committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to help plan and execute the strategic work necessary in creating a truly inclusive and equitable School for everyone at Middlesex. This letter is a formal announcement of the formation of that committee. Further communication about the many additional steps the School is taking to address these issues will come shortly after the opening of school in September.

The committee is chaired by trustee Brickson Diamond P’13, whose consulting firm, Big Answers, has helped some of the world’s most successful organizations achieve their diversity and inclusion objectives. To further facilitate a broad and deep impact on the entire Middlesex community, the committee also includes the executive leaders on each of the board, school, and alumni groups. The committee is also composed of the chairs and vice-chairs of the Long Range Planning committee, the Learning, Teaching and Community committee, and the Marketing and Communications committee. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee charter is attached to this letter.

As a committee, our first imperative has been to listen to our Black community and educate ourselves on the roots and manifestations of racism at Middlesex. We recognize, too, that there are additional marginalized groups at Middlesex, and we are committed to identifying and working closely alongside these communities as well. With a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges we face as a School, the committee has begun planning a path forward. We recognize that embedding cultural change is a process that requires careful planning and execution over time, but there are also clear steps we can take right now to forge a more inclusive, ethical, and anti-racist community. We are taking the following steps:

- David Beare has appointed Erika Prahel as the School’s new Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Over her 19-year tenure on the Middlesex faculty, Erika has worked tirelessly in support of our students of color, and has led MxFAM, our affinity group for Black, Brown, and Latinx students, with her trademark rigor, energy, empathy, and vision. Her understanding of the School’s core values and internal challenges is deep and nuanced, and the School will benefit tremendously from her leadership in this senior administrative position.
- To gain a more complete understanding of the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Middlesex, the school is hiring an independent DEI consultant for the 2020-21 school year. The consultant will be asked to provide the trustees with a detailed report on the role and effectiveness of DEI initiatives on campus, to identify areas in which our community values do not align with our students’ actual lived experience, and to make actionable recommendations for the School to close this gap. The new board committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will oversee the hiring of the outside consultant in consultation with school-side and alumni leaders. We began our search process in June and have identified several very strong candidates for this work. We plan to introduce our consultant to the community in September.

- The Middlesex Alumni Association has formed a new committee to address matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the alumni body. Chaired by Lauren Williams '04, the committee will work with the Middlesex alumni office to launch alumni affinity groups, improve communication between alumni of color and the School, establish relationships between alumni and current students, and serve as a conduit of information and feedback to the Board of Trustees. [You can read the MxAA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion charter here.](#)

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is deeply grateful for all of the courageous voices who have shared their painful stories and for all those who have shared their thoughtful feedback and recommendations. Current and future Middlesex students will be part of a more inclusive and anti-racist community as a result of your passionate engagement with the School on this vitally urgent issue.

We welcome feedback from our entire community, and we invite you to reach out to us at deitrustees@mxschool.edu. Together, we will engage in the hard and essential work of bridging the gap between what Middlesex is and what we aspire to be.

Sincerely,

Brickson Diamond P'13
Committee Chair

Stephen Lari '90
Board President

David Beare
Head of School

Rob Trumbull '00
MxAA President

Rodney Clark P'18'21
Trustee

Sarah Leary '88
Trustee

Joy Connolly '87
Trustee

Patricia Melton '77
Trustee

Erika Prah
Dean of Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion

Eric Kester '04
Director of Strategic
Communications

Jason Sport
Dean of Students

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:

Chair: Brickson Diamond

Charter: The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has the following on-going responsibilities:

- 1) To clearly define and communicate the School's values and goals regarding matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 2) To continually review the health and equity of School culture, communicate identified misalignments to the Board, and mobilize required remedies through the standing board committees.
- 3) To advise and support the School in overseeing policies and aligning resources that facilitate an equitable, safe, and ethical environment for all members of the community.
- 4) To monitor the progress of the School's equity and diversity work, and to ensure community values and standards are upheld in all facets of School life.

Composition: In addition to committee chair Brickson Diamond, The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee includes Head of School David Beare, President of the Board of Trustees Stephen Lari, and President of the Middlesex Alumni Association Rob Trumbull.

The committee is also composed of three Middlesex faculty members as well as the chairs and vice-chairs of the following Board committees:

1. Long Range Planning
Chair: Rodney Clark; Vice-chair: Rob Trumbull
Board Role: Engage the Board and School in long-range planning for the School's future, both in formal planning processes and in on-going oversight of the School's strategic decision-making.
2. Teaching, Learning and Community
Chair: Joy Connolly; Vice-chair: Patricia Melton
Board Role: To maintain and communicate the Board's understanding of the current educational landscape, including standards, best practices, and opportunities for improvement.
3. Marketing and Communications
Chair: Sarah Leary; Vice-chair Brickson Diamond
Board Role: Advise and support the School's work on communication to its external constituencies.