

2021-26

**DIVERSITY,
EQUITY,
INCLUSION,
AND
BELONGING**
STRATEGIC
PLAN



WILLISTON
NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL

DEAR WILLISTON NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY,

From its inception last summer, Williston's Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) used the school's mission statement as its guiding principle in creating the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Strategic Plan. Our mission states, "The Williston Northampton School inspires students to live with purpose, passion and integrity." Yet, the events and discussions of the last year have demonstrated that our mission has not always produced its intended effects or been applied equally to our entire community. During the past year of upheaval, we have heard and understood that not all members of our community feel welcomed, respected, included, and that they fully belong. We believe the strategic goals and actions that follow take substantial steps to cause the community to reflect on its past—good, bad, or indifferent—while setting a better path for the future.

Over the course of our deep self-reflection, and in discussion with students, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni, the ARC heard stories from members of our community who felt they had been victims of racism, bias, or injustice. It likewise read similar accounts in emails and on social media from BIPOC community members. These anecdotes have both pained us and galvanized us, and we are forever grateful for the courage it took for these individuals to come forward with their stories.

The ARC and the Williston Northampton School acknowledge that the school's own practices, however unintentionally, may at times have contributed to the feelings of racism and injustice that BIPOC members of the community have experienced. Williston also recognizes the urgent necessity for both immediate adjustments, as well as long-term strategic solutions to ensure that Williston becomes an anti-racist institution where all students enjoy the liberty to "live with purpose, passion, and integrity."

Anti-racism demands active opposition to racism through intentional actions, policies and practices at an individual, interpersonal, and institutional level. Williston seeks understanding and commitment from all in the community to satisfy this mandate moving forward.

Creation of the new plan began in June of 2020, when Head of School Robert W. Hill III established ARC, comprised of alumni, faculty, administrators, parents, and trustees. Over the course of eight months, the ARC met via Zoom for 90-minute meetings on more than a dozen occasions while also brainstorming in smaller groups beyond those meetings. These efforts brought forth a draft of the plan and the specifics of our call to action. The ARC then solicited and incorporated into the plan honest and critical feedback from our BIPOC alumni, other alumni constituencies, and from members of the Board of Trustees.

The plan that follows outlines our initial strategies targeted specifically to the experience of our BIPOC community members. It is intended as a living document, its implementation subject to oversight and accountability to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees. Williston is confident that it will revamp institutional structures, further diversify our community makeup, broaden our curriculum, educate our community, and continue to seek input from varied stakeholders. Williston is committed to seeking funding for support for BIPOC faculty and students consistent with this plan. We anticipate that as its goals are realized, new priorities will be added, including those that address the needs and issues of other underrepresented groups. Williston looks forward to partnering with all of you and communicating regularly about our progress as we fulfill our mission, live up to our values, and strive to make everyone in the Williston community feel an equal sense of belonging.

Sincerely,
The Williston Anti-Racism Committee

THE WILLISTON ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE



John P. Booth Jr. '83,
Trustee



Sarah Carlan '92, P'21, '23,
Head's Visiting Council



Erin Davey,
Director of Inclusion and
Community Life



Cyrus Driver '76, Trustee



Rachel Gordon,
English Teacher, Assistant
Director of Inclusion



Robert W. Hill III P'15, '19,
Head of School



Sarah Klumpp P'24,
History and Global Studies
Department Chair



Bryant McBride '84, Trustee



Matt Porter,
Science Teacher



Dan Rowe '12



**Ann Laupheimer
Sonnenfeld '75,** Trustee



Gabby Thomas '15



GOAL 1

REVAMP ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Action 1.1 Hire a full-time Dean of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) who will help lead the execution of the DEIB Strategic Plan and coordinate the measuring of its implementation and effectiveness.

Action 1.2 Make the Dean of DEIB a member of the Senior Administrative Team.

Action 1.3 Create a new standing Board of Trustees Committee on Diversity; the Dean of DEIB will serve as the primary liaison to this committee.

Action 1.4 Continue to monitor BIPOC membership on the Board of Trustees and identify potential future BIPOC candidates.

Action 1.5 Consistent with and in tandem with increases in recruitment and hiring of additional BIPOC faculty, increase representation of BIPOC faculty in leadership/administrative roles at Williston.

Action 1.6 Establish a Faculty/Staff Diversity Committee to support the work of the Dean of DEIB.

GOAL 2

INCREASE FACULTY AND STUDENT DIVERSITY

Action 2.1 Broaden BIPOC faculty recruitment efforts by pursuing best-practice strategies such as attending BIPOC job fairs, conducting on-campus recruitment at HBCUs, and building relationships with college and university career-center staff.

Action 2.2 Broadly promote job openings to people-of-color networks including parents, alumni, and current teachers.

Action 2.3 Develop a mentorship/peer program for faculty and students of color; consider partnering with other schools in the region via affinity gatherings.

Action 2.4 Make Williston more welcoming to BIPOC faculty and students to improve retention; develop materials for incoming BIPOC faculty and students, such as a resource book.

Action 2.5 Create more opportunities for current BIPOC students and faculty to connect with prospective classmates and colleagues; create a select group of diverse admission tour guides for prospective BIPOC students.

Action 2.6 Ensure that BIPOC students have equal resources and encouragement to secure leadership positions and celebrate those achievements.

GOAL 3

ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Action 3.1 Ensure all students share a baseline “common experience” related to DEIB education.

Action 3.2 Along with traditional disciplinary options, create and incorporate restorative justice techniques when students use racial and/or biased language.

Action 3.3 Establish and maintain student-centered and teacher-supported affinity spaces for all groups of students.

Action 3.4 Be aware of and better support the unique social-emotional needs of BIPOC students.

Action 3.5 Sponsor student attendance at local and regional diversity conferences, including the People of Color Conference (PoCC) and the Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC).

Action 3.6 Seek out a broad array of undergraduate college options for all students, including both HBCUs and other top-tier universities and colleges.

GOAL 4

AUGMENT FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING

Action 4.1 Set aside money and time in the annual calendar for training and educational events for faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees.

Action 4.2 Develop and promote faculty/staff affinity groups. Train affinity-group leaders in facilitation.

Action 4.3 Require mandatory training in inclusive pedagogical teaching and cultural competency practices for all incoming teachers and administrators as part of their overall orientation to the school community.

Action 4.4 Provide professional development opportunities (PoCC, White Privilege Conference, AISNE and NAIS diversity and inclusion training, workshops, and webinars) to faculty throughout the academic year and summer.

Action 4.5 Train dorm parents to be more culturally competent/aware regarding the BIPOC experience; provide restorative justice training for dorm heads and all members of the Deans Office.

Action 4.6 Ensure that Williston maintains and effectively implements appropriately non-discriminatory hiring practices, and that grading, discipline and college placement practices are and continue to be applied without regard to race, religion, gender, ethnicity or any other category.

GOAL 5

SEEK COMMUNITY AND ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

Action 5.1 Let our BIPOC community know they have been and will be heard on issues of diversity, equity, and belonging during their time at Williston and beyond. In addition, communicate on a regular and ongoing basis about progress against our DEIB plan. Use objective measurable survey methodology to assess success of the plan.

Action 5.2 Through our programs and policies, affirm our shared commitment that all constituencies play a role in making Williston an anti-racist and welcoming community.

Action 5.3 Be intentional in asking all constituencies to assist in the recruitment, retention, and overall support of our BIPOC students and faculty.

Action 5.4 Relaunch a BIPOC alumni affinity group that assists the Dean of DEIB and the school with DEIB efforts, while connecting BIPOC alumni with each other and the school. As part of this effort, implement new data gathering for BIPOC to self-identify race, ethnicity, and other affinity group connections.

Action 5.5 Increase on-campus activities for BIPOC with both affinity-specific and school-wide diversity events; invite BIPOC alumni back to campus for roundtables, mentorship, networking, etc.; establish a BIPOC annual alumni award.

Action 5.6 Seek formal input from current and graduating BIPOC students and their families through a survey about their experiences at Williston, as well as their aspirations and support needs for the future as alumni of the school.

GOAL 6

RAISE FUNDS AND INCREASE ENDOWMENT

Action 6.1 Establish, sustain, and endow a new Equity Fund to create a reliable source of supplemental aid for students with high financial need, going above and beyond the cost of tuition and books to underwrite the spectrum of additional expenses related to the true cost of attendance.

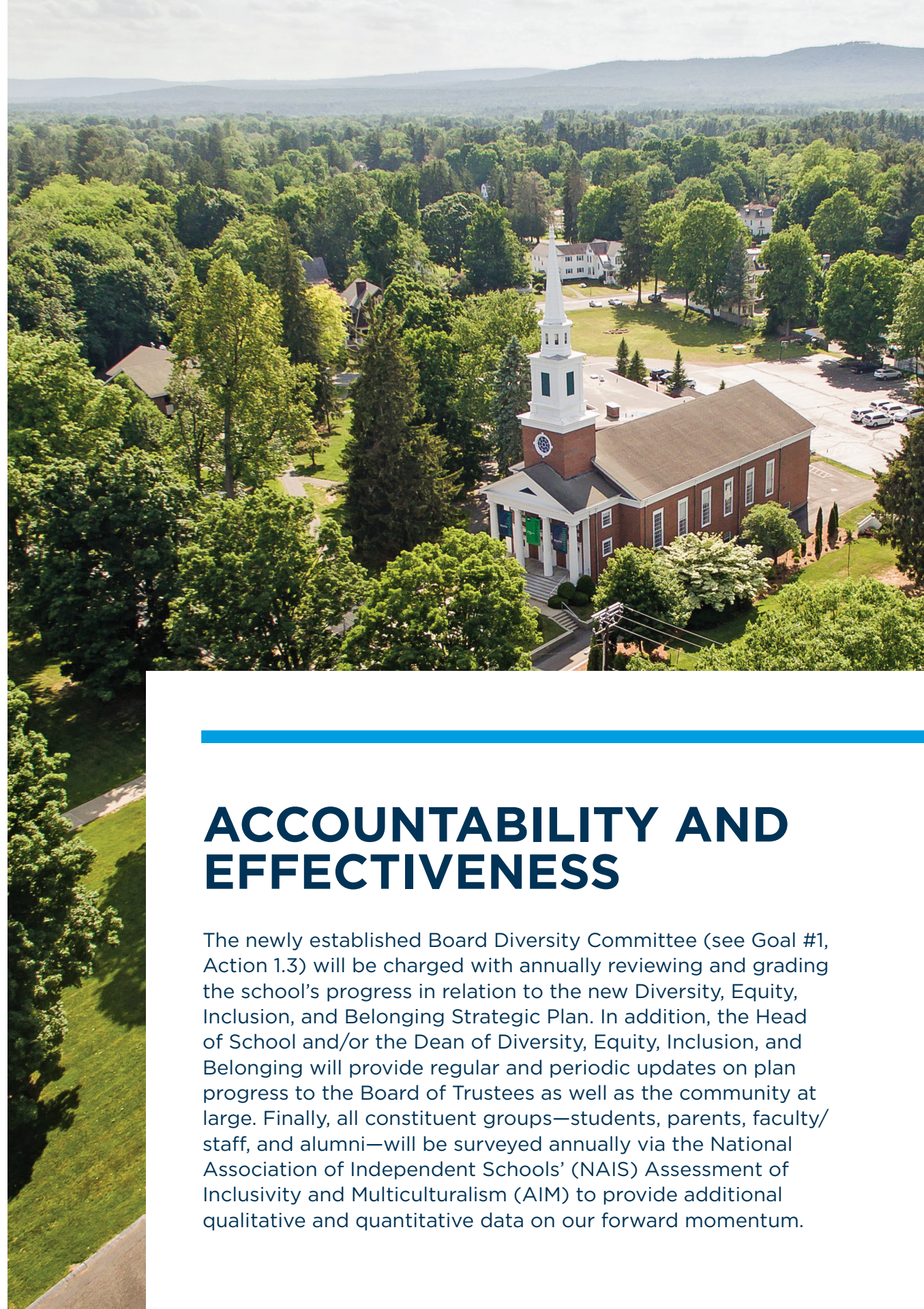
Action 6.2 Foster enrollment of additional BIPOC students with high financial need.

Action 6.3 Broaden opportunities for Williston Northampton Fund donors to earmark their annual fund gifts in support of expenses related to ongoing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts.

Action 6.4 Seek targeted fundraising support for students, faculty, administrators, and staff for DEIB programming, professional development, and training.

Action 6.5 Build financial resources to attract, recruit, and retain young faculty of color.

Action 6.6 Take advantage of DEIB enthusiasm among many of our actual and potential donors by developing a clear message about Williston's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Be prepared to articulate why DEIB is essential to the success of Williston's institutional advancement.



ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

The newly established Board Diversity Committee (see Goal #1, Action 1.3) will be charged with annually reviewing and grading the school's progress in relation to the new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Strategic Plan. In addition, the Head of School and/or the Dean of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will provide regular and periodic updates on plan progress to the Board of Trustees as well as the community at large. Finally, all constituent groups—students, parents, faculty/staff, and alumni—will be surveyed annually via the National Association of Independent Schools' (NAIS) Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM) to provide additional qualitative and quantitative data on our forward momentum.



For more information and updates on Williston DEIB initiatives, visit williston.com/diversity