



Dear Miquon Community,

Last week [a petition](#) was circulated around Philadelphia calling for many independent schools to take responsibility for not sufficiently teaching students about race and racism, or protecting their students of color, past and present. While Miquon was not included in the group of schools named in the petition, this is not because our history is any different. We know that there is much more that Miquon could and should have done in terms of what we teach in our formal curriculum, along with whose stories we tell and whose experiences make the norms for the community. We know there is more we could and should have done in our support for students, including naming and interrupting racist acts, large and small, within our community and on our campus.

Miquon has a long and biased past. Early Board minutes from the 1930s tell of a decision to limit the number of Jewish families attending the school. Several years later, the first Black family to apply was rejected because the Board was concerned that the experience of a single Black child on campus would be negative. Somewhere along the way these types of explicit discrimination were removed from policy, although not officially replaced by statements to the contrary. While modern Miquon would be horrified to be seen as a racist institution, there are many allegations leveraged against independent schools that also pertain to Miquon, forcing us to recognize not only ways we have existed that are racist or bigoted, but also that the experiences of our Black students, staff, and families are and have not been without racially based aggressions, many of which have gone unaddressed.

At the same time I remember times from my own childhood at Miquon when teachers interrupted racist behaviors and called it out, and I see this happening at school today. But if you ask, *Are we doing or have we done enough?* We have not. While diversity, equity, and inclusion work is a priority in our curriculum, in our professional development and hiring, and is called out as a specific area of focus in our Strategic Plan, we haven't always taken the opportunity to talk about what we have done wrong, or what we have stood by and watched continue.

Beyond examples of overt racism, which is part of the issue, we also need to work on dismantling the systems that perpetuate racism. It is a lot easier for people, particularly well-intentioned white people, to say "I would never do that!" and to remove themselves from responsibility, than to recognize the ways they benefit from centuries of disenfranchisement that have led to the racism of today. While we have sometimes done a good job teaching anti-racist lessons in response to certain situations, reaction is not enough. We must be proactive in teaching our children how to be better citizens with, advocates for, and upstanders of each other than we have been in the past. And we must do a better job ourselves of learning not just how to set a good example, but how to live one.

We are committed at Miquon to doing this work and to weaving it into the fabric of our everyday experiences. If you are an alumni, or a former staff member, or a current or alumni parent and you experienced racism at Miquon, if reaching out to share that experience will help you, I am here to listen and you are welcome to [email me](#) or to [submit your story anonymously](#). These thoughts are not mine alone — they represent the feelings of the staff and Board of Directors, and most specifically our staff and board committees on Diversity, Equity, and Action, who support this work and are dedicated to Miquon examining what can be done to dismantle the white supremacy in our institution and move forward with a focus on anti-racist work.

In response to ongoing police brutality and anti-Black violence in our country, the Board Diversity, Equity, and Action Committee wanted to offer families concrete ways to join together in response. Therefore, the Committee developed a plan for eight weeks of action to sustain this work through summer. We invite all members of our community to participate in the following actions and to share their experiences with us.

Week 1: Self Education Week

Week 2: Discuss Children's Literature with Sarah and Celia

Week 3: Read Children's Literature

Week 4: Listen to a Podcast about Race

Week 5: Make a Poster

Week 6: Chalk the Walk

Week 7: Write a Letter

Week 8: Sign up for a Family Affinity Group

You can find details about each week [here](#), on the [school calendar](#), and [on our website](#).

If you have any questions, please reach out Board Diversity, Equity, & Action Committee Chairs [Rachel Reynolds](#) and [Miriam Rock](#).

We should not have waited for this catalyzing moment to speak out so directly about our painful past, or to promise to do better in the future. But we are promising a deep and thorough commitment to not just “diversity” or “equity” but to anti-racist teachings, curriculum, hiring practices, and professional development. Social justice is not new to Miquon, and while we know this work will never be finished, we must play an active role in moving it forward. As always, our children teach us as much as we teach them: we can follow their lead if we give them an opportunity to raise their voices as upstanders and agents of change.

In partnership,  
Susannah

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The Miquon School  
2025 Harts Lane  
Conshohocken, PA 19428

See what's happening on our social sites:

