



PRIVATE SCHOOL VILLAGE

# K-12 Private School Climate Survey Results

*September 2020*



Private School Village (PSV) builds community by organizing social events, sharing resources, and providing programs for Black/African-American families in independent schools (K-12). Learn more at [www.privateschoolvillage.org](http://www.privateschoolvillage.org)

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## Are you racist?

### Are you sure?

I am racist to some degree, or rather, I have bias that if empowered and in a certain situation and structure, could be used in harmful ways. And, in fact, so do you. Now that we know we all have the ability to be racist, or rather, that we all have bias that if unchecked and empowered can cause harm, the better questions are -- how does this show up in the school community, in institutions with a history rooted in racism? How are you proactively working to ensure that bias -- something we all have -- isn't informing your behavior and decisions in a way that causes harm?

Embracing an anti-racist school community means we each need to ask ourselves these questions and take responsibility to do our individual part. In addition, because we need action on every front, in every way, and because

Private School Village (PSV) is uniquely positioned to share resources and information, we launched this first-of-its kind survey to help us learn and track progress. It is a starting point and we hope that together, parents and school communities will use the results and recommendations to become stronger.

We know it's not a perfect survey and that much of what it reveals isn't new. We know it leans more towards the elementary school experience and we know that with 40 questions there were still more to be asked. We know that "one size doesn't fit all" and that often, some behind-the-scenes work has to come before visible action. Basically, we know there is tremendous room for growth and interpretation. Yet still, this inaugural survey, coupled with open-ended testimonials and related research, sheds light on what's needed today.

We hope you will take these findings to heart and embrace them to strengthen the school experience.

Lisa Johnson  
Founder



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**June 23, 2020**

SURVEY OPENED

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**499**

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

**326**

COMPLETE RESPONSES

**73%**

RESPONDENTS WERE  
BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN;  
12% WERE WHITE AND 10% ARE  
MULTI ETHNIC/OTHER

**40**

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
QUESTIONS

**34%**

OF RESPONDENTS REPRESENT  
1ST - 3RD GRADE; 20% IS 4TH-6TH  
GRADE, 14% IS 7TH-8TH GRADE,  
12% IS PREK-K AND 11%  
REPRESENTS 9TH - 12TH

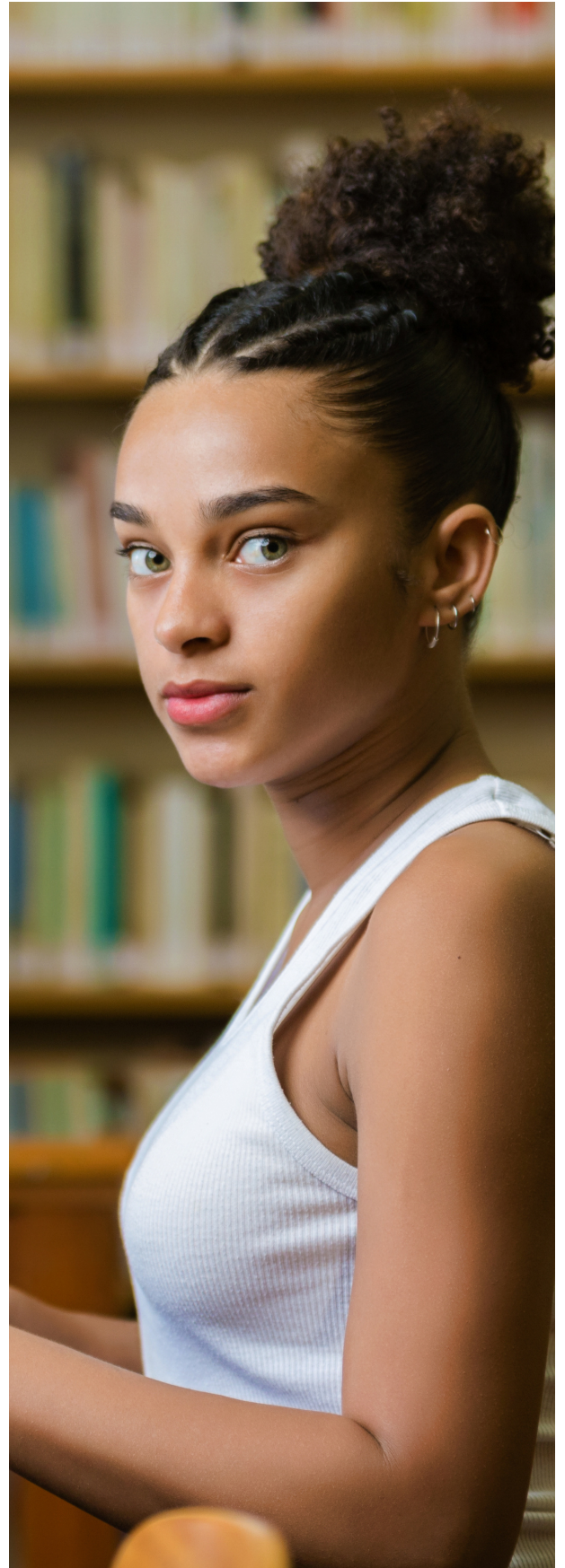
**9 min, 24 secs**

AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON SURVEY

**August 9, 2020**

SURVEY CLOSED

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## Schools Represented Included

The Archer School for Girls  
Berkeley Hall School  
Brentwood School  
The Buckley School  
Campbell Hall Episcopal  
The Center for Early Education  
The Country School  
Chadwick School  
Chandler School  
Children's Community School  
Clairbourn School  
Crestview Preparatory  
Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences  
Curtis School  
Echo Horizon School  
Episcopal School of Los Angeles  
Escuela Plus  
Geffen Academy at UCLA  
Harvard-Westlake  
Hollywood Schoolhouse  
International School of Los Angeles  
John Thomas Dye  
Laurence School  
Los Encinos School  
Loyola High School  
Lycee International de Los Angeles  
Marlborough  
Mirman School  
New Roads School  
Notre Dame High School  
Oakwood School  
Pilgrim School  
Polytechnic  
PSI Pluralistic School  
Sequoyah  
Sierra Canyon  
St James' Episcopal School  
The Thacher School  
Turning Point  
UCLA Lab School  
Viewpoint School  
Village Christian School  
Village School  
Wesley School  
Westerly School  
Westland School  
Westridge  
Westside Neighborhood School  
Wildwood School  
Willows Community School  
Windward School  
Woodward Academy

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## Key Survey Findings

# 45%

OF RESPONDENTS FEEL HEARD,  
SEEN & SUPPORTED BY THE  
SCHOOL COMMUNITY

39% feel this way “sometimes” and  
16% do not feel heard, seen, and  
supported

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# 49%

FEEL THEIR SCHOOL HAS A  
CLEARLY DEFINED, WELL-  
PUBLICIZED DEFINITION OF  
DIVERSITY

40% do not feel their school has a  
clearly defined, well-publicized  
definition and 11% are not sure

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# 60%

DO NOT THINK THEIR SCHOOL'S  
DIVERSITY INITIATIVES  
ADDRESS ADEQUATE GOALS  
RELATED TO THE BLACK  
COMMUNITY

22% do think there are adequate goals  
and 18% are not sure

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## Key Findings

# 29%

REPORTED THAT 6-10 STUDENTS IN THEIR CHILD'S GRADE ARE BLACK

15% said 10-20 students are Black, 12% said there are 4, 26% said there are 3 or less

# 14%

REPORTED HAVING 30-45 STUDENTS IN TOTAL IN THEIR CHILD'S GRADE

13% have 45-50 students and 12% have 50-60 and 9% have 20-25 students

# 80%

REPORTED THAT AT LEAST TWO, SAME-GENDERED BLACK CHILDREN ARE IN THEIR CHILD'S GRADE

16% reported that there are not at least two and 4% didn't know

# 32%

REPORTED NOT HAVING A BLACK TEACHER DURING THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE THUS FAR

25% reported having one (1) and 18% reported having two (2) and 8% had three (3)

# 22%

REPORTED CURRENTLY HAVING ONE (1) BLACK TRUSTEE ON THEIR SCHOOL BOARD

21% reported having two (2); 15% report having none and another 21% were not sure of the number of Black Board members

# 34%

REPORTED NOT HAVING ANY BLACK ADMINISTRATORS IN A SENIOR LEADERSHIP POSITION

29% reported that the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion position was held by a Black administrator and 19% reported the position of Director of Athletics was held by a Black administrator and 15% were not sure



## Key Findings

**48%**

**SAID THEIR SCHOOL DOES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT & TOGETHERNESS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR**

41% said they do not offer this

**67%**

**REPORTED THAT THEIR SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE AN AFFINITY GROUP EXCLUSIVELY FOR BLACK STUDENTS THAT INCLUDES STUDENTS IN HIS/HER GRADE LEVEL.**

23% reported that their school does offer this for Black students

**51%**

**SAID THEIR SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE AN AFFINITY GROUP EXCLUSIVELY FOR BLACK FAMILIES**

42% said their school does offer this for Black families

**32%**

**REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILD FEELS A SENSE OF BELONGING AT SCHOOL**

28% reported feeling “some belonging,” and 21% reported a “tremendous amount of belonging”

**37%**

**REPORTED THAT THE GREATEST BARRIER TO HELPING OUT AT THEIR CHILD’S SCHOOL THIS PAST YEAR WAS THAT THEY WORK FULL TIME AND COULD NOT GET AWAY DURING THE DAY**

30% reported that they volunteer monthly at school and 23% say they volunteer weekly



## Key Findings

**61%**

**HAVE EXPERIENCED A MICROAGGRESSION OR RACIAL INCIDENT IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

56% said they did report the experience/incident to the school, while 44% said they did not report the incident/experience to the school

**39%**

**OF THOSE WHO REPORTED A MICROAGGRESSION OR RACIAL INCIDENT SAID IT WAS NOT HANDLED WELL BY THE SCHOOL**

19% felt it was handled “somewhat well,” while 17% felt it was neither handled well or not well

**41%**

**DID NOT REPORT A MICROAGGRESSION OR RACIAL INCIDENT AT SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T CONFIDENT IT WOULD HELP**

34% just wanted to move on and 33% said it was because there wasn't a clear process for reporting stuff like this





## Select Open Ended Responses: Is there anything you are proud of and/or perceive to be a "best practice" when it comes to supporting the Black community?

Note: Names have been redacted to ensure privacy and to focus on the content of the comment.

- We have an active parents of color group.
- Last year the school had planned to have [REDACTED] lead our school (staff, parents, students) in race and equity workshops and conversations. Because of COVID the series has been postponed to start this year. She will work with our school for the next two years.
- The administration and teachers have taken an active role in speaking about Black Lives Matter this year. They have initiated weekly discussions and webinars to discuss social injustice and people's views in our school community. Also, we have great African American representation throughout the school community including teachers, administrators, and security guards.
- Our White Head of School makes equity and anti-racist work top priority. They provide space for BIPOC students and families to be listened to and supported. They provide ongoing parent education for White anti-racist parents too.
- I am proud that in the years since I joined my current school, POC now occupy leadership positions at all levels. At the senior administration level, there are now 3 senior admins on a team of 12 who identify as Black/African American and 1 LatinX person, directing advancement, academics, student life, and admissions--no small roles! As a matter of best practice, I have found that POC need to be in the room, at the table, and empowered when we are making decisions/policies that affect our students and constituents of color--especially when we speak of diversity as a tool for educating students of all backgrounds. Our Black and African American community members need to have a voice at the table--someone with the lived experience to understand the complexity of experiences that are impacted by institutional-level decision-making.
- We have more Black students at our current independent school than we did when we were at our zoned LAUSD school.
- I'm proud that my child has a Black guidance counselor she can go to if she needs help.
- We have very strong parent affinity groups that really support families and advocate their needs to administration.
- Our head of DEI is beyond committed and works tirelessly to provide support.
- NOT at our school, but at a friend's independent school, the Head of School heard that parents were going to peacefully protest with their kids following George Floyd's death. He asked if he could join so he and his team walked in peace with Black and Brown parents. I think this shows so much about a school.
- Creating space for conversation around race. It should be mandatory that folks attend a conversation about it.

## Select Open Ended Responses: Is there anything you are proud of and/or perceive to be a "best practice" when it comes to supporting the Black community?

- Listen, address concerns immediately and make policy changes to support eradicating explicit and implicit bias.
- As a White ally, I am proud of the steps the school is taking in this direction, but aware that there is much more the school can and should be doing, especially with respect to hiring teachers and administrators. However, I believe the Head of School has worked tremendously hard to communicate about DEI and justice issues. I hoping hiring follows.
- The administration is willing to not only engage with the Black student affinity group, but also, they are willing to defer to them.
- Diversity Sub-committee on Admissions.
- They changed the history class curriculum when we pointed out the omission of Africa in ancient studies.
- Very important to have staff who look like our children and can be their advocates with perspectives that reflect their reality and experiences.
- The school is direct and frequent in its messaging about racial injustice.
- Teaching our Black students the importance of their history and that it's something to be proud of and cherished. I want to make sure our students help support each other both during the good and not so great times.
- Our Black Student Union has a clear voice with the administration and the administration has shown the willingness to consult with them before actions specifically addressing Black people or people of color in general. At the last People of Color Conference, our school was one of the few that sent Trustees (3 Trustees, 2 of whom are Black, attended the entire event).
- Affinity spaces. Lower school is very welcoming in terms of inviting families in to share their traditions and culture.
- ██████████ Head of School and Board of Directors issued a Black Lives Matter resolution and commitment to Black families that was nothing short of genuine and powerful with action points.
- This year our son was diagnosed with some learning differences and the school was extremely supportive and responsive during this process, especially because it happened right before the school shut down. We feel the school did not profile our son as we've heard that has happened to others. They did not judge him based on the color of his skin but on what was going on. We are grateful to be at the school as we feel they're partnering with us to give our son the support he needs. One area of our school's long range plan is inclusion - hiring more diverse staff, teachers, enrolling more diverse students, teaching the anti-bias framework in all grade levels. There's a concerted effort to continue to increase teaching social justice and anti-bias framework and the teachers need to be on board with that. I am proud of what the school has done and where it's headed though it could focus more on how to support the Black community, not just the POC community.



## Select Open Ended Responses: Is there anything you are proud of and/or perceive to be a "best practice" when it comes to supporting the Black community?

- A Black PHD psychologist in the role of SPED services teacher reached out to me regarding my child and helped me in supporting my son before I withdrew.
- Sincere effort by many families to continue making Black experiences and voices heard, and the bravery of upper school students to speak up.
- Three Black board members for the upcoming year.
- Non Black families showing up to support Black families.
- We have a poetry share during Black History Month.
- Active training and implementation of both anti-racist curriculum for faculty and similar training for ALL families.
- Best Practices: Bias training for teachers; Incorporation of Black studies into regular curriculum.
- Our affinity group for Black students and parents is vibrant and strong.
- Having several BIPOC in strong leadership positions. My daughter has role models all around her.
- Training the board, administration, faculty/staff, parents and students in cultural competency.
- Retreat before school starts with students.
- This is the list of DEI initiatives & Objectives at [REDACTED] that I am proud of: 1.) Issuing a school-wide climate survey 2.) Preparing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice vision statement 3.) Extension of our restorative justice practices to the upper elementary grades 4.) Continued implementation of anti racist curricula and pedagogy, and ongoing training for faculty and staff 5.) Review of our hiring practices to mitigate bias 6.) Establish and nurture more pipelines for candidates of color 7.) Revision of faculty and staff assessments to include cultural competency metrics 8.) Training governance and leadership to understand their roles in diversity, equity, and inclusion work 9.) Review of school policies and procedures to ensure our impact as an institution matches our intentions.
- H [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] is very conscious of things going on in the school community and the world at large. We had an online vigil for George Floyd, they respect and support BLM, we have a diversity director who holds seminars for all staff and faculty to participate, we send faculty and students to diversity conferences, the school has a commitment to admissions diversity as well as faculty and staff to reflect the diversity of Los Angeles, parents speaker series have many speakers on racism, cultural diversity etc. We are not a perfect school, but we are continually and consciously striving in the right direction and I am grateful for that.
- I am proud of the diversity in the student body. One of the most diverse independent schools in California from what I understand.
- Having Black male teachers, my son is in 2nd grade and has had one in each grade.

## Select Open Ended Responses: Is there anything you are proud of and/or perceive to be a "best practice" when it comes to supporting the Black community?

- Our school continues to make its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative a priority. Our school listens and has worked over our years at the school to implement many of the changes we have asked for.
- I appreciate that our school has a Black parenting group and a Black student union, which doesn't exist at similar schools we interviewed. It was part of the decision in choosing this school to attend. The school also makes an effort to engage with the students and have open discussions about the current racial tensions and how this can be addressed in their everyday lives.
- Our administration reaches out to check in to see if things are moving in the right direction. Curriculum is being assessed to better reflect Black history and other cultures as well.
- Our school has diversity baked into its mission and has made great strides attracting & retaining students and faculty of color. The school has an emphasis on social justice, and the curriculum and daily discussions reflect that. These are among the top considerations that attracted us to the school in the first place, and have held true during our entire tenure.
- The parents have come together and formed a group to help with racial diversity at the school. It is for all parents with children of color. We also met with the Head of School to voice our concerns about the curriculum, needing Black teachers and needing more Black students. He hired a diversity coach as a response.
- Our school offered weekly virtual topics on YouTube lead by a therapist dealing with everything from how to talk to your children about COVID and racism, and parenting during a pandemic to selfcare.
- Very happy at [REDACTED] and extremely pleased [REDACTED] who heads the diversity division. She has really brought the school up to today.
- I think [REDACTED] walking the walk regarding DEI. While there is still work to do, specifically hiring Black administrators (and this is most certainly a function of economics), the commitment from our Head of School is real, consistent, and practiced. I don't believe other schools walk the walk to the same level.
- The student led protest that was fully supported by the school's administration. The letter that the Head of School penned as well as a separate letter for the Board of Trustee emailed in support of BLM.
- [REDACTED] a very unique school when it comes to diversity. It is no doubt in my mind that the leadership of the school has ensured that this is at the heart of who they are. I chose this school after visiting over 15 schools before making the final decision to place my child here. As a Black family diversity and inclusivity is at the soul of who we are. When there was an incident at the school related to my child's hair by her White peer group, the school took this very seriously and did not brush it off as a little incident. This secured our decision that we had made the right decision to send our child there. We are big supporters of [REDACTED] and continue to recommend children to the school.

# 10 Recommendations

## **Community Life & Engagement**

- Clearly define diversity in the school community, particularly clarifying the intent to improve racial diversity and even more specifically, efforts targeting the Black community. Communicate this definition broadly and often (e.g. Why is racial diversity so important to your mission? How will you achieve the diversity goals?)
- Develop a comprehensive diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) plan that, at a minimum, includes strategies, tactics, and evaluation solutions specifically focused on:
  - the recruitment and retention of Black students, teachers and administrators,
  - developing and implementing a multicultural curriculum that includes a comprehensive accounting of Black history,
  - increasing awareness and engagement strategies for non-Black school community allies.
- Significantly increase communication, engagement and transparency between administrators and Black parents, faculty, staff, students and alumni particularly on matters related to racial diversity. Significantly increase communications about race in general among the entire community.

## **Recruitment & Representation**

- Increase representation of Black Trustees by ensuring Board pipelines are adequately inclusive and such that each school creates aggressive stretch goals to immediately increase representation.
- Increase representation at the leadership level among administrators, above and beyond DEI and athletic positions. Aggressively work to retain current Black faculty and staff, and train and evaluate existing non-Black faculty and staff against DEI goals.





# 10 Recommendations



## **Policies & Practices**

- Trainings: Require all teachers, staff and administrators to annually participate in racial literacy training and offer ongoing training for all students, even those in elementary school; Schools should take steps to offer social, emotional assessments of Black students to understand possible stresses and trauma related to their school experience.
- Offer intentional spaces of support and togetherness for Black students, K-12 (e.g. multicultural clubs, affinity spaces). Affinity groups exclusively for Black families should also be heavily considered.
- Adopt a school-wide policy that no student or teacher will say the n-word, even when reading from literary text, and define appropriate ongoing educational opportunities about the word.
- Evaluate an existing (or create a new) student disciplinary process involving microaggressions and racial incidents to ensure there are regular opportunities for feedback about the process and a strenuous evaluation of who implements and manages disciplinary actions.
- Integrate systems and processes to regularly evaluate DEI initiatives and give yourself reasonable grace as your efforts evolve. These are complex times with myriad obstacles and challenges throughout, and meaningful change takes time.

## PSV Board of Directors

Tarik Brooks  
Vice President &  
Office of the Chairman,  
Combs Enterprise

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Thommy Guerrero  
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& Parent Education  
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Dawn Limerick  
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Derrick Williamson  
6th Grade Teacher  
Carlthorp School

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Curtis School Parent

Iman Farrior  
UCLA Lab School Parent

Dawn Limerick  
Campbell Hall Episcopal School &  
Notre Dame High School Parent

Anita Martin  
Turning Point School Parent

Kara Sax  
Wagon Wheels Preschool Parent

Melanie Winns  
Brentwood School Administrator &  
New Roads School Parent

Questions? Interested in seeing the survey data?

Contact [PSVAdmin@privateschoolvillage.org](mailto:PSVAdmin@privateschoolvillage.org)