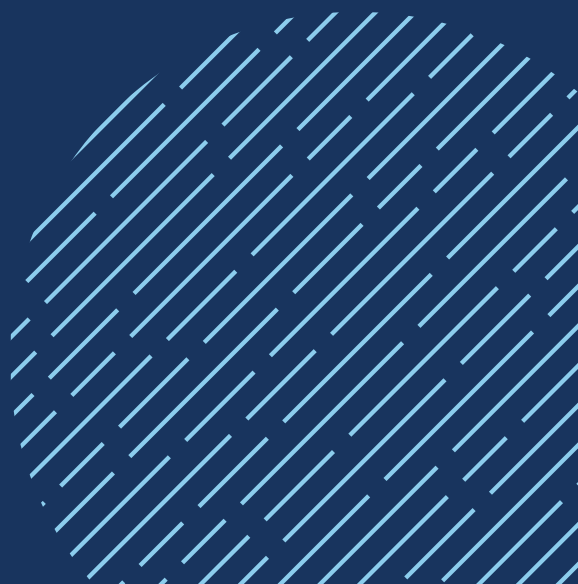




THE
MOUNT
VERNON
SCHOOL

IDEA Action Report 2022-2023

Inclusion Diversity Equity & Action





IDEA Statement

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)

The initiative of building a more inclusive, equitable, and regenerative community remains central to the School's IDEA commitment. As we focus on cultivating **relationships**, developing **programs**, and designing **strategies** to scale our efforts within our community, we hold the experiences, stories, and data gathered at Mount Vernon as a guidepost for our work today and in the future. Striving towards continuous improvement, the 2022-2023 IDEA Action Report amplifies three action steps: (1) to build capacity in the dialogic model across both campuses; (2) to scale the Inclusion Network: Affinity & Alliance Program; and (3) to advance cultural proficiency framework for students, faculty/staff, and administrators.

Action Step 1:

Build capacity in the dialogic model across both campuses

Building strong relationships requires deep understanding underscored by a commitment to practicing "reflective structured dialogue." Reflective structured dialogue moments encourage perspective taking, leaning into listening as opposed to responding. This model supports a structured experience that assures all participants engage freely and not be restricted by concerns of judgement.

Integrating the dialogic model into the fabric of our community, the School has taken thoughtful, intentional steps to implement and scale components of this practice across both campuses. In student-centered moments of advisory, community, and morning meetings, we see students deepening their capacity to dialogue across differences by holding the experiences of classmates and peers as valuable. As an example, in the fall and winter, faculty/staff and students engaged in a series of experiences to support understanding around expectations and perspectives of the School's spiritual life program.

Fuel behind this growth is a direct outcome of professional development training for faculty, in designing and cultivating dialogic classroom environments. Dialogic classrooms demand connection before content and with connection, students are empowered to engage with learning in ways that unleashes cognitive potential. Additionally, Upper School student representatives have become trained as dialogic facilitators in which they co-designed and facilitated one of their first sessions for parents from the Mount Vernon Parent Network. This will expand in the 2023-2024 year as we grow our cohort of Upper School dialogic facilitators and introduce new student leadership opportunities for IDEA Student Practitioners. Cultivating a strong foundation, we are poised to partner with student leaders in the work of meeting our commitment to each and every member of the Mount Vernon community.

Action Step 2:

Scale the Inclusion Network: Affinity & Alliance Program

Focused on relationships, the School, during the 2020-2021 school year developed and designed an affinity and alliance model, empowering underrepresented members in our community to cultivate deep relationships with others who share a common identity and similar experience. Last year, the School launched the inaugural Inclusion Network Affinity Program, centered on building community and making connections, specifically for the BIPOC community at Mount Vernon, with the intention to scale the network during the 2022-2023 school year.

Supported through the Mount Vernon Parent Network, this year, the School introduced the MVGlobal Affinity Program through the leadership of our parents. MVGlobal facilitates connections between families with strong international links and interests. Sharing the rich cultural diversity within the Mount Vernon Community and beyond, this affinity group support increased awareness, knowledge, and inclusion of international cultures and events and to provide support systems between and for students and families with international backgrounds especially with no extended family living in the United States.

Culminating in March, the MVGlobal event on the Lower Campus was an awe-inspiring event filled with learning of all kinds where grandparents, families, students and friends of Mount Vernon came together to share lived experiences through food, games, cultural performances, history, art and so much more. In addition to the MVGlobal event highlighted, the Inclusion Network has hosted various experiences for School families on and off-campus throughout the year.

Since its inception, students have shared openly about the ways in which affinity and alliance groups have enhanced their School experience and the experiences of others. During the previous three years, Upper Campus students have exercised their agency, with the intentionally structured support of faculty, to create affinity and alliance spaces reflective of the cultural and spiritual identities in our community. These gatherings foster connections, build positive culture, and promote belonging for all members of the community to be seen and heard. Aptly stated by an alliance club student founder, "A simple familiar face in the crowd can truly make a difference in your high school experience. This will become a group of familiar faces."

Action Step 3:

Advance cultural proficiency framework for students, faculty/staff, and administrators

At Mount Vernon, we define young adult success as being college ready, globally competitive, and engaged citizen leaders. In setting the conditions, we recognize that the journey begins with our youngest learners as is evident in the dedicated work of our NAEYC accredited Preschool and extends through the inquiry-based learning experiences in all of our divisions through Upper School.

Last year, the Office of IDEA partnered with faculty/staff to conduct research and design a prototype of the Mount Vernon Cultural Proficiency Framework. At the heart of this framework is the recognition that positive identity development is the foundation supporting student cognitive growth and performance. The capacities in this initial framework are developmentally appropriate by age/division and scaffolded within the MV mission and values. Moreover, this framework brings to life the interdependent nature of the School's competency-based model, IDEA Statement, and overall commitment to human development.

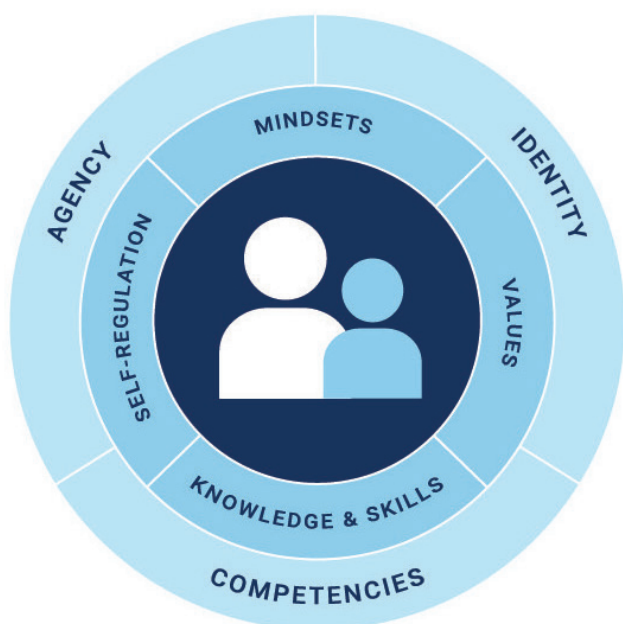
During the 2022-2023 school year, the School reflected on the original prototype and iterated the framework (see below) for building cultural proficiency in our students through Mount Vernon learning experiences, both curricular and extracurricular, based on the following objectives:

- explore the value of designing cultural proficiency competencies based on age bands and not simply grade level to account for the spectrum of needs and abilities within our divisions

- identify and add developmental tasks necessary for infant and toddlers (trust & autonomy)
- analyze which faculty competencies directly support adult capacity to guide students through building cultural proficiency
- integrate cultural proficiency development into experiences such as chapel and expeditions

Illustrating how developmental experiences can shape school culture, the Lower Campus students in the fall participated in the Identity Tapestry. Weaving visual connections, the experience originated as a self-reflection technique. By the end of the year, students, one by one, have woven their stories into this piece with different colored strings based on their grade level. As one student said, "I like the idea of learning more about other people. Sometimes I follow a color string to see what hobbies and likes other people have that match mine." As students add their stories to the tapestry, each strand holds other strands and pins in place.

From our most critical early childhood moments to the realization of independence and capability of middle adolescence, we seize opportunities to support self-awareness and remind students that their unique contributions to our community are vital and valued.



INFANT - TODDLERHOOD

Trust; Autonomy

EARLY CHILDHOOD (3 TO 5)

Self-regulation; interpersonal (social-emotional) knowledge and skills

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6 TO 10)

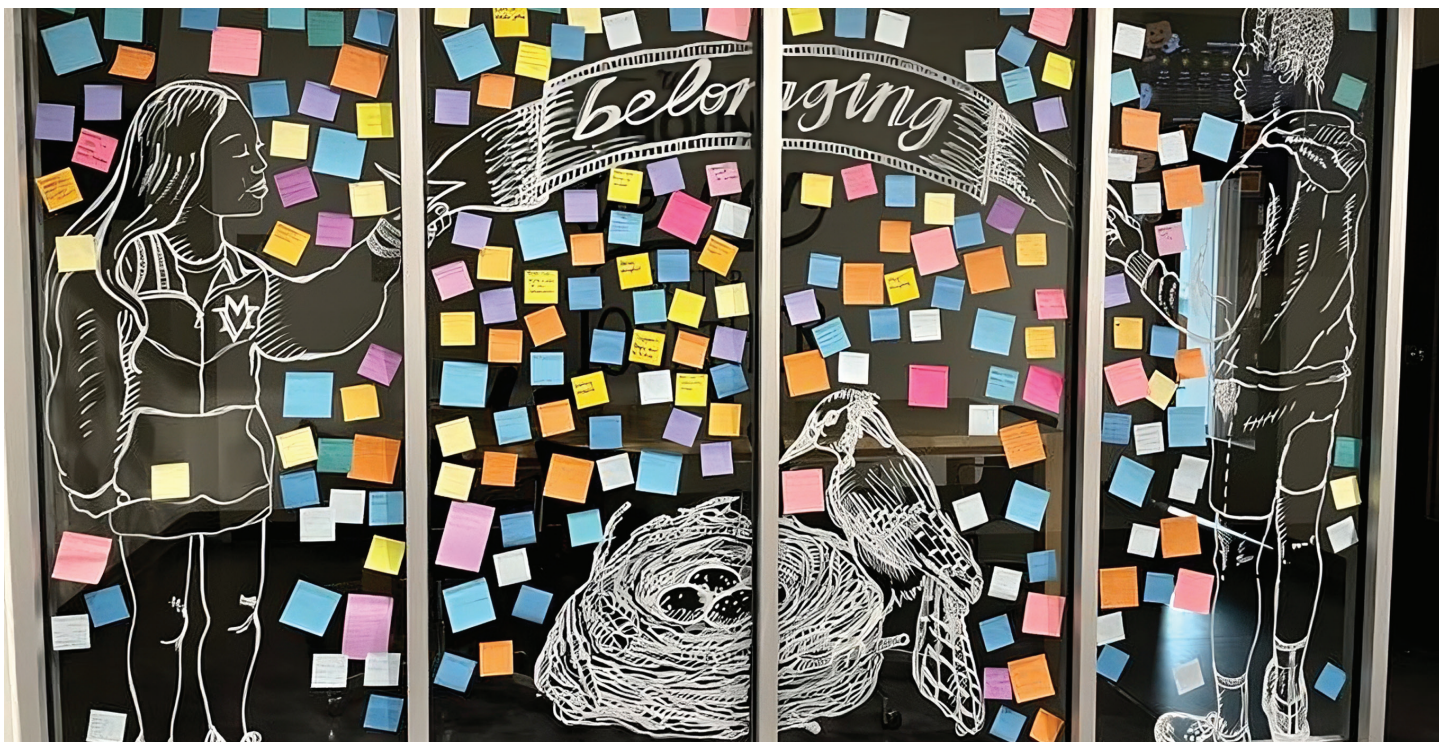
Self-regulation (self-awareness and self-control); learning-related skills and knowledge; interpersonal skills

EARLY ADOLESCENCE (11 TO 14)

Group-based identity; emerging mindsets

MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE (15 TO 18)

Sense of values; individual identity



IDEA Spotlight Story

Art Mimics Life Through Visual Representation of Belonging

"There was a real blue jay mama outside of the studio giving flight lessons to her young. I couldn't even get my head out the door, that's how protective she was. A few of us watched the little bird hop, unable to fly while the mom flew in a circle. Eventually, it did make it to a neighboring rooftop. Before the bird could fly away, we asked ourselves if we should interfere and help the bird off the pavement, or just let things be and hopefully, they figure it out. We decided to let nature take its course, which was the right call," described Mariana Depetris, Upper School Visual Arts Faculty and Visiting Artists' Program Coordinator.

"Mount Vernon creates belonging by having a common goal, and by upholding the same principles in our community, by instilling core values to strengthen individuals", expressed Ms. Depetris. While she and her class were trying to figure out how to take care of this fragile bird, they were simultaneously working towards a common goal and creating belonging.

Through this experience, an art installation has emerged in the most traveled hallway in the Upper School. "Belonging" is a painting that depicts Ms. Depetris' baby bird story in front of two students holding a "belonging" banner. Jamal Arif, Class of 2023, and Priscilla Andrin, Class of 2026 were the models, but they also served as representatives for the entire Upper School student body. Jamal is a Senior and Priscilla is a Freshman who both participate in sports, clubs, and other interests in and outside of School like many other students. The sticky notes around the painting are student-written thoughts about belonging. "We all wrote

a few notes in Advisory and our teachers stuck some of them up around the painting. Students are also welcome to stick more on the window if another thought comes to mind." Madison Kaul, Class of 2023 explained. Some notes that have spoken to many of our students are...

- Belonging feels like happiness
- Belonging feels like love and support, like a warm blanket
- Belonging sounds like being able to joke with a group
- Feels like safety and comfort
- "I noticed _____. Are you alright?"
- Sounds like laughter, selflessness, kind and supportive words
- Sounds like being a part of a conversation
- Affirmation

Students were able to watch and contribute as the painting evolved. It was a visual representation of how belonging is a work in progress and how everyone is responsible for lending a hand.

This painting is part of Mount Vernon's intentional focus on well-being and resilience-supported by guest speaker, John Trautwein who shared his story of love and belonging. Head of School Kristy Lundstrom shared, "The mural created by teacher-artist, Mariana Depetris is an example of students and faculty coming together to spotlight connection. We know from research that when children feel a sense of belonging and safety, they are more ready to learn, grow, and positively impact those around them. This is how we at Mount Vernon approach all interaction and connection."



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