



August 28, 2020

Dear Mercy High School students, alumnae, parents, faculty, and staff,

At the beginning of August, we shared with you Mercy High School's commitment to actively improve the experience of our Black girls at Mercy. As a first step in our journey, we will be holding listening sessions for the Black members of our community—students (sophomores, juniors and seniors), parents, alumnae, faculty, and staff. Through these listening sessions, we seek to broaden our understanding of their experiences at Mercy High School and of the barriers to an inclusive and equitable community.

The goals of the listening session are to:

1. Create a safe space for authentic and challenging dialogue around race, racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion at Mercy.
2. Gather information that will help guide future efforts around student life and discipline, communication, professional development, and alumnae engagement.

The listening sessions will be facilitated by an independent consultant, Ms. Michelle Black. In addition to her consulting work, Ms. Black is the director of diversity, equity and inclusion at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart, one of the leading Catholic girls' schools in the Washington, D.C. area. She will be supported in the listening sessions by Ms. Niakia Cheese, our newly appointed director of equity and inclusion. [Click here to learn more about these two dynamic and thoughtful women.](#)

Our sessions will be held on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, September 1, 6:00-7:15 p.m.: Alumnae

Wednesday, September 2, 6:00-7:15 p.m.: Parents

Wednesday, September 9, 6:00-7:15 p.m.: Sophomores, Juniors & Seniors

Sunday, September 13, 1:00-2:15 p.m.: Alumnae

Sunday, September 13, 6:00-7:15 p.m.: Sophomores, Juniors & Seniors

Monday, September 14, 7:00-8:15 p.m.: Faculty and staff

Thursday, September 17, 6:00-7:15 p.m.: Sophomores, Juniors & Seniors

Sunday, September 20, 1:00-2:15 p.m.: Parents

[Click here to register for a listening session.](#)

We are deeply grateful for the candor of those who participate in the listening sessions. Their voices will help improve the experience of our Black students and families. At the recommendation of Ms. Black, we will be holding listening sessions for white allies a little bit later this fall.

For those of you who are unable to participate in the listening sessions, we still offer you the opportunity to bring your voice to the discussion by emailing Ms. Cheese at wearelistening@mercyhighschool.com.

These listening sessions are just the beginning of a journey toward a school community that is truly a Circle of Mercy. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Sincerely,

The Mercy High School Leadership Team