

**Alumni Letter to Porter-Gaud
COPY**

****PG Alumni:** To sign the letter, please fill out [this google form](#) by Sunday, June 14th at 11:59PM ET. Signatures will be added in alphabetical order below on a rolling basis.**

June 2020

Mr. D. DuBose Egleston Jr.
Head of School
Porter-Gaud School
300 Albemarle Road
Charleston, SC 29407

Dear Mr. Egleston and members of the Board of Trustees,

We write to you as concerned graduates of Porter-Gaud. Despite the school's note acknowledging the death of George Floyd, we are disheartened by the lack of specific action. We know Porter-Gaud to be a place that supports and cares for its students. But our school must do much more to welcome and support students of color, particularly Black students, and to teach all Porter-Gaud students how to actively engage in anti-racism. If Porter-Gaud wishes to be the "pillar of knowledge, honor, and truth" we know it can be, we urge you to take the actions listed below.

Porter-Gaud remained all white until 1967, 13 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* barred segregation in public education. The school is currently a member of the South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA), which was founded in the 1960s by non-public institutions that served as a "haven" for "white flight families" resisting desegregation [John Egerton in *Shades of Grey*, quoting Larry Watt, former Executive Director of SCISA]. While SCISA schools now appear to practice nondiscrimination, the legacy of this racism is apparent in the student bodies that fail to reflect the racial diversity of the surrounding communities.

As an active participant in SCISA, and simply as a school educating the next generation of thinkers and leaders, Porter-Gaud must grapple with its role in an education system that is still largely segregated. Porter-Gaud remains an overwhelmingly white institution with a curriculum that does not adequately address the many legacies of American slavery and racism.

We know the school is currently revising its Strategic Plan. We hope we can work with you to make the following changes:

1. Increase financial aid—The wealth gap between white and Black families in Charleston is the same as it was a half-century ago, in the wake of the Jim Crow South. Porter-Gaud must become accessible to families at all income levels; it must become accessible to families who have been unable to accumulate wealth due to racist housing, banking, and hiring practices. We are confident our community would step up to contribute toward this purpose.

2. Ensure curriculum at every grade level examines the history of Black Americans, the writing of Black authors, and the art of Black creators—The past weeks have made it clearer than ever that our society needs to do more to understand the Black American experience, and Porter-Gaud’s teaching curriculum should acknowledge that. It has been a while since many of us graduated, but as we recall, PG curriculum skewed heavily in favor of white authors and narratives. Porter-Gaud should instead expose students to the voices of all communities, especially the Black community that comprises a foundational part of Charleston’s history and has been marginalized for far too long. These rich voices will help PG students become more attuned to the full breadth of their community, the racial dynamics of which cannot be responsibly ignored.

3. Emphasize anti-racism curriculum—Even beyond literature and articles written by Black authors, Porter-Gaud should actively teach anti-racism principles. PG creates a community of discussion and learning. This community could be a valuable space in which to explore complex topics, like racial privilege and allyship. Incorporating anti-racist lessons will help students, namely white students, learn how to understand their own privilege and their ability to work alongside Black students and other students of color to shape a more just world.

4. Commit to recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining more Black faculty, staff, and administrators—Many of us were in middle school (or later) before we had our first Black teacher. For Black students, this leaves them with no school role models that look like them. For all students, it models a harmful system of white power. Porter-Gaud must also do more to support the Black faculty and staff that are already on campus, ensuring that their perspectives are heard and valued.

5. Provide non-Black faculty, staff, and administrators with training on how to recognize their own biases and how to incorporate anti-racist principles in their work—Even if Porter-Gaud were to become no more diverse than it currently is (which would be a great loss), its leaders must educate themselves on systems of oppression in order to better educate their students.

6. Withdraw from SCISA and encourage its dissolution—At a minimum, Porter-Gaud must facilitate academic and athletic competition and interaction with a more diverse range of high school students in South Carolina.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your reply, to working with you on the concrete steps that will follow, and to seeing how Porter-Gaud is capable of realizing the values of its faith tradition and of a more just society.

Sincerely,

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Anna Rhett Allen '18	Elisabeth Blakeney '15
Maurishire Akabidavis '11	Flora Boatwright '15
Asya Anderson '00	Alexandria Borden '19
Josephine Appleby '10	Jack Borden '12
Hunt Applegate '06	Amauri Bowman '16
Wendy Ellison Armon '85	Summer Boyd '17
Dee Dee Arthur '87	Robert Brickman '00
Brennan Aust '13	Morton Brilliant '90
Grayce Bailey '13	Kelly Brothers '07
Stefanie Bainum '05	Kayla Brown '10
Camilla Baker '13	Kara Bruce '00
Charlie Baker '11	Katherine Bryan '13
Seth Baker '10	Libby Burrous '08
Katy Bakker '03	Wilson Burrous '05
Matt Ballenger '95	Elizabeth Byrd '04
Rose Ballou '09	Anne Cai '10
Mallory Banks '12	Jack Callahan '09
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Taylor Barber '10	Sage Callen '11
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Katie Chick '15
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Hannah Clark '14
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Maggie Cochran '16
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McLean Coen '13
Logan Coleman '15
Lauren (Scott) Collins '00
Wells Collins '06
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Casey Conrad '07
Mi'Kola Cooper '12
Dante Cox Perozzi '79
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Brett Cranny '15
Leah Crawford '13
Max Crawford '11
Bailey Crump '13
Riley Daen '12
Anna Damjanovic '18
Wilson Daniel '12
Connor Danielowski '08
Sheneq Daniels '09
Allie Darby '02
Joycee Darby Wood '05
Leland Darby '10
Erin Davis '14
Megan Davis '10
Jack Deke '11
Caroline Dennis '14
Logan Dennis '14
Joel Derfner '91
Lauren Detreville '00
Carrie Dillon '14

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Connor Dodenhoff '16
Emma Donaldson '15
Carter Downing '08
Alison Draisin '89
David Draisin '96
Abigail Droge '08
Lynn Dryzer '81
Cierra Duncan '13
Isabel Arana DuPree '96
Suzanne Eaddy Pickett '99
Sam Eason '16
Benjamin Edwards '15
Carter Ellis '13
Grayson Ellis '20
Becca Ellison '11
Hannah Ellison '08
Judah Ellison '17
Matthew Ellison '06
Chloe Engel '11
Patrick Ennis '13
Mary Virginia Ervin '19
Peter Evans '81
Robert Faith '13
Elizabeth (Thompson) Felderman '11
Priyanka Fernandes '18
Hannah Fisher '10
Danielle Fishman '11
Jordan Fishman '15
Savannah Flagg '19
Sarah Fowler '08
Lauren Ellison Fox '00
Elizabeth Jones Fox '01
Grace Friedman '19
Jacob Friedman '17
William Friedman '15
John Frye '17
Emily Furr '12
Sam Neill Furr '11

Lauren Fylstra '05
Nathan Garrison '05
Katie Geer '02
Hannah Geils '13
Abby Gentile Birbach '00
Samantha German '10
Kelly (Danielowski) Gerth '11
Catherine Gibson '17
Emily Gibson '10
Matthew Gibson '91
Jack Gilchrist '15
Galen Givens-Rowlin '10
Willem Goedecke '19
Haydon Goer '07
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Iris Jeffries '12
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Cc:

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