

BLS Parents Stand for Equity and Diversity in Support of Students

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As parents rally to show support for the recently resigned BLS headmaster and assistant headmaster, there are parents who also want to make sure that racial justice, equity, and a positive school climate do not get lost in the stories about the school. BLS Parents Promoting Equity and Diversity (PPED) mobilized this winter to demand and help foster an environment and culture at Boston Latin School that promotes humanity and equity in all facets of school life. The group functions as allies and advocates on behalf of students. PPED works to increase transparency, improve communication, and hold all stakeholders accountable to ensure BLS is a community that supports the inherent worth and dignity of every student. The group expressed disappointment that many in the community are criticizing administrative changes rather than calling for the best possible learning environment and community for all BLS students, no matter who they are.

“There is a rallying call to come out and share support for the headmaster rather than a call to action to come problem solve and work together to envision and realize the best possible learning environment and community for all BLS students, “ said one member of the group.

“At the end of the day, all parents want the same thing for their children: a school environment that fosters and supports a positive learning experience. Though many students and families at BLS have wonderful experiences at the school, there are many students for whom the experience is less than satisfactory. The school and the city must be sure that all students receive the education they deserve and that if they are treated unjustly, that their needs are addressed,” says Karen Maziarz, BLS Parent and Alumna.

The parents of PPED have been concerned that many in the community have dismissed the very real issues brought to light by the students of BLACK at BLS as exaggerations or aberrations.

“We must be careful, as parents, to speak from our own experience, and also to listen to the experiences of others and recognize them as real,” said BLS parent Sarita Thomas.

For those with children who have experienced the very things that BLACK at BLS first publicized or for those who sympathize with students who have less than ideal experiences at BLS (or parents who just understand we all live in this world together and that injustice and/or racism suffered by one really hurts us all), the blatant dismissal and the constant lack of acknowledgement that there are indeed things to fix at BLS speaks to the micro-aggressions that occur in our society daily and within BLS.

Indeed, it is privilege that allows members of the BLS community to engage in a conversation without taking a critical look at the entire picture, and it is blatant disregard for other human beings that would not permit those same community members to even consider that BLS, like any institution, can be improved and made even better. There may be those who are pleased with how things are going at BLS and with its leadership; however, that experience does not negate the lived realities of the students of color who have voiced concerns that are counter to that outlook. To even suggest, as the outgoing assistant principal has done publicly since he offered his resignation, that there is no merit in any of these allegations or that all is well within BLS, is misguided and dangerous.

The group has taken no position on the resignation of Headmaster Lynne Mooney-Teta or Assistant Headmaster Malcolm Flynn, but is instead dedicated to ongoing work that will be required over the next several years to build a community that fosters the worth of each child. They hope to work collaboratively with other parent, faculty, BPS staff and city personnel to better prepare ALL students for “responsible and engaged citizenship, and a rewarding life” or work toward the “development of the whole person, the intellect, the body and the spirit,” as communicated in the school’s mission and website.

“As a parent, you want to know your child is being nurtured by the people who spend just as much, if not more, time with your child. Since I joined PPED, the group has maintained a collective commitment to improving BLS, recognizing that there are multiple perspectives and experiences within the BLS community.” Sarita Thomas, BLS Parent.

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