



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

December 18, 2020

Dear Members of our AB community,

We are outraged by last night's blatantly racist attack on members of our school committee. We are outraged not only as school committee members, but as human beings. Racist acts have no place here. It is unthinkable to us that we would be put in a position where we would have to say what we feel is obvious: Every single person, regardless of their race or the color of their skin deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. We believe that there is power in our diversity, and we stand strong in our resolve to continue our work even in the face of uncivil and morally reprehensible acts such as we experienced last night. Neither our values nor our commitment will be compromised by horrible, racist messages.

We often hear that our communities are not racist, but we believe that this is naive. The last several years have been fraught with tension over the rising number of racist and antisemitic acts in our schools and on our campuses. The community reaction to the school committee's recent unanimous decision to retire the colonial mascot is just the latest example of the tension that members of the BIPOC and ethnic and religious minorities in our community have always felt. I have lived in this community for nearly my whole life. Although there is much to be proud of, including the origins of our towns, there is much work to be done. At times, we are not always a welcoming community. Throughout my tenure on school committee we have been made aware of racist and anti-semitic attacks. They have been resolved by the district and many of our white community members have moved on. Moving on has furthered the damage these attacks have inflicted. It has hindered the critical anti-bias work the district has prioritized. Last night's words are just the most recent and visible example of the undercurrent of racism that runs through our towns. It was disgusting, hateful and embarrassing. Our outrage and anger will mean nothing unless the school committee uses our voice to show solidarity with the BIPOC members of our community and works together to change the culture of our communities.

The work of this committee must include what our BIPOC community members share as the reality of their experience. Our vote to retire a symbol that is not representative of many in our community has led to increasingly personal attacks against members of our committee. We are volunteers. Disagreement doesn't mean misunderstanding. As a school committee, if we are to live up to the

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ideals that we value as a school community, we need to begin to take action on the racism that we know exists in our community. We need to listen more closely to the voices that have been telling us that there is a problem. We must rededicate ourselves to the antiracism and anti bias work already underway. We will stand up for our colleagues, friends, and neighbors and refuse to remain silent bystanders in the face of racism.

Tessa McKinley

Chairperson

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee