

RE: Regarding the expulsion of The Turpin family's two children from Latin



Doug Turpin [REDACTED]



10/21/2021

Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 4:22 PM

To: Denny OLeary

Subject: RE: Regarding the expulsion of The Turpin family's two children from Latin

Denny, thank you very much for your response. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter with you.

I fully acknowledge and always wholeheartedly embraced the Parent-School Partnership's statement that "A positive collaborative working relationship between the School and a student's parent/guardian is essential to the fulfillment of the School's mission." Importantly, the very next line states that Latin can discontinue enrollment "if it concludes the actions of a parent/guardian make such a relationship impossible or seriously interfere with the School's mission." That is an understandably very high burden for Latin to ever meet, and, in my case, Latin's burden was obviously not met because I was merely following Latin's own parental policy for voicing concerns when our children were summarily expelled.

As you know, on September 10, the Head of School summarily expelled our two children from Latin because he did not agree with the concerns that I raised with Todd Ballaban, Head of Middle School, related to the manner in which our sixth-grade son was treated by one of his teachers. During the meeting, Todd and I had a very civil conversation about the situation, while Chuck sat and listened.

However, Chuck became agitated that I had a different point of view than Todd. Yet rather than work toward a mutually satisfactory reconciliation or resolution, as required by the family handbook, Chuck interrupted the conversation and stated that our children could only remain at Latin if I promised to go along with whatever Chuck did at Latin and did not raise any further concerns.

When I questioned what Chuck was asking of me and why he would make such an unusual demand of me, he summarily expelled our two children and walked out of the room. I recorded the entire conversation. He removed our children from the only school they have ever known. He removed them from their teachers and from their friends.

While I completely understand the Board's reluctance to intervene in connection with a decision made by the Head of School, the Board is nonetheless responsible for Chuck's actions. Typically, the Board would not have the time or wherewithal to second guess a disciplinary action taken by the Head of School, but, in this case, the audio shows that Chuck's action – not my action or my wife's action – violated the Parent-School Partnership. Far from it being "inappropriate" for the Board to intervene, the Board is actually required to do so in order to uphold Latin's obligation to my family.

The Parent-School Partnership, which is incorporated into each enrollment agreement, sets forth the expectation that parents "will address comments/concerns directly to the appropriate person at the School" and that Latin "will seek to answer/address comments and concerns through direct

conversation with Parents.” Todd and I followed the Parent-School Partnership at the September 10 meeting.

In light of the fact that Todd and I followed the Parent-School Partnership, how can our children be expelled on the ground that my actions made it “impossible” for my wife and I to have a positive collaborative working relationship with Latin or on the ground that my actions “seriously interfered” with Latin’s mission?

Chuck was obviously prohibited by Latin’s own written policies and enrollment agreement from expelling our children. The Board should, therefore, immediately offer to reinstate our children, and, considering the grave harm the expulsion has caused to our family’s reputation in the Latin community, the Board should also send a communication to the Latin community acknowledging the error and apologizing for the wrongful expulsion.

However, the Board should go even further to ensure that this injustice does not happen to other families. At the very least, the Board should require Latin to provide notice and an opportunity to be heard for all disciplinary actions, including but not limited to those attributed to the actions of parents or guardians.

Denny, don’t you agree that the Board should get involved when it receives information that the Head of School violated a family’s rights under the Parent-School Partnership and enrollment agreement? Considering that the Board is ultimately responsible for Chuck’s actions, wouldn’t it make sense for the Board to consider my request for an offer of reinstatement under these circumstances, as well as reforms surrounding disciplinary actions?

I look forward to your response, and I welcome a further conversation.

From: Denny O’Leary

Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 6:19 PM

To: Doug Turpin

Subject: Re: Regarding the expulsion of The Turpin family's two children from Latin

Dear Doug,

As you know, our school has in place a policy on the Parent School Partnership that requires a “positive, collaborative working relationship between the School and a student’s parent” which we agree, as a condition of continued enrollment, is “essential to the fulfillment of the School’s mission”. The Board has delegated to the Head of School the authority to assess whether that relationship between parents and the school meets the requirements of the policy. It would be inappropriate for the Board to intervene in that determination, and we will not do so. We wish you well in finding an educational placement that meets your needs.

Sincerely,
Denny O’Leary

On behalf of the Charlotte Latin Board of Trustees

On Oct 16, 2021, at 10:14 AM, Doug Turpin wrote:

Denny, thanks for your response. I have been looking for the opportunity to present evidence to the Board that this decision was improper and inappropriate. Are you saying that the Board does not have the authority to review decisions of the Headmaster or that the Board is unwilling to do so. If you could help me better understand the position you are stating, I sure would appreciate it. Thanks.

From: Denny O'Leary

Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 9:11 PM

To: Doug Turpin

Subject: Re: Regarding the expulsion of The Turpin family's two children from Latin

Dear Doug,

Thank you for your email to the Board of Trustees. All decisions regarding family departures from Charlotte Latin are within the purview of Chuck Baldecchi, Head of School, and not the Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

Denny O'Leary

On behalf of the Charlotte Latin Board of Trustees

On Oct 9, 2021, at 7:04 PM, Doug Turpin wrote:

Dear Members of the Charlotte Latin Board of Trustees,

On September 10th, Chuck Baldecchi suddenly and wrongfully expelled our two children from Latin.

We would like to speak with you directly so you can ask us questions and obtain any other information you may find necessary to review this matter. That way, you will see that we are being truthful and transparent.

Please thoroughly read and review the information we are providing. We would like to talk with each of you, individually, to discuss what happened to our children at the hands of Chuck Baldecchi in hopes that our children can be immediately offered reinstatement at Latin and that we can avoid this from happening to other children.

We have supporting documentation, transcripts and recordings demonstrating that Mr. Baldecchi expelled our two children from Latin because he did not like our point of view regarding the changes made that occurred with a lack of transparency and dialog at Latin.

Summary of Events

On Friday September 10th, our 11-year old son, Logan, and our 13-year old daughter, Olivia, were expelled by Chuck Baldecchi, with just hours' notice. Our children were ordered, without even knowing why, to clean out their lockers and were permanently removed from the school they had attended since

TK. Our children were not expelled for any issues with their behavior. They were expelled because Mr. Baldecchi did not like that we participated in the group Refocus Latin and provided feedback to the Board and the school that questioned the direction he was taking Latin.

This large group of about 60 fellow parents provided civil and respectful feedback about their concerns around what we believed was a lack of transparency and collaboration from the school. This parent group also had specific concerns with changes in the direction of the school, which seemed to be a dramatic departure from the way it was represented to us when we originally applied to Latin. This group created a presentation at the request of the Board's Vice Chair, Mike Freno. It was presented to the Executive Committee at Latin on August 24, and we were all assured that there would be no retaliation allowed against us for what we presented to the Board. About two weeks later, Mr. Baldecchi expelled our two innocent children. They were expelled from the only school they had ever known, without warning, and without any due process. Mr. Baldecchi's goal in doing this, was to create a climate of fear among parents and faculty, such that if you question what he is doing, you will be the next to be expelled or fired.

Mr. Baldecchi expelled our innocent children, on the spot, to silence the parents that questioned the changes he was making.

In this the documentation I will send you as a follow up to this email, I will lay out in a transparent and factual manner, what Nicole and I were accused of. We will outline the "offenses" Mr. Baldecchi claimed that warranted immediate expulsion. Upon request, we will provide an additional email that outlines all documentation and correspondence cited in this email and are open to talk about this experience and the difficulties this situation has placed our children in.

Latin welcomes feedback

On September 14th, the Board stated in its communication to all Latin Parents and Faculty:
"We believe in the equity of opportunity for all and are steadfast in our belief that Latin will be a community where all people and all voices are heard, valued, and respected. We stand firmly behind and reiterate our commitment to increasing the diversity of our community; and, in doing so, foster a vibrant environment strengthened by all voices and perspectives. We welcome thoughtful and constructive feedback from all members of our community as an indispensable element to the continued progress of our school. Differing perspectives and points of view are what challenge us and make us stronger. At times and where appropriate, we expect feedback may be critical and, in such instances, the Board and Administration are committed to honoring such feedback by objectively listening and, when necessary, working in partnership to address."

Turpin Children Expelled

We were civil and respectful in all of our communications with the Board and the school personnel. The Board cannot state that it "welcomes thoughtful and constructive feedback from all members of the community," while also expelling students when families engage in dialog. Mr. Baldecchi's expulsion of our children conflicts with the above statements of the Board and conflicts with the "Parent-School Partnership" document that encourages parent comments and concerns. We assume the Board is unaware of the facts underlying Mr. Baldecchi's expulsion of our children. This immediate expulsion, done at this time of the year, left us with no good options for even finding another private school. Other private schools are generally full and won't have openings until next year, a fact which Mr. Baldecchi was well aware of when he chose immediate expulsion.

I tape recorded the conversation of my meeting with Mr. Baldecchi and Mr. Ballaban on September 10th, where the actual expulsion occurred. I did this to protect my family's reputation against false accusations or more untruthful claims. I am glad that I did, because this meeting was, in fact, a setup held for the primary purpose of expelling our children. (I will provide you with a copy of the transcript from this tape and the tape itself, where Mr. Baldecchi asserts that the communications we had with the school are violations of the school enrollment agreement and constituted sufficient justification for kicking our kids out that day.)

Request for a Just Outcome

Our goal is to have a just outcome. One that prevents this type of situation from ever happening to another family in the future. We have to see the black mark that Mr. Baldecchi put on our children's record remedied. Every school asks when applying if our children were expelled, but there is nowhere for us to explain this was an act of unjust retribution. All that needs to occur, is for us to show you the correspondence we had with the school, as well as the recording we made of the meeting when the expulsion occurred. Then you will be able to see for yourself that there simply was no justification for what he did to our children. After reviewing the information we provide, it is our expectation that you will find that his actions have created a situation where some changes need to be made. To begin with, our children need to be offered reinstatement at Latin.

Please let me know of a good time for us to get on a call to discuss this with you, so I may answer any questions you have.

Thank you,

Doug & Nicole Turpin