

FW: Latin Board Meeting follow up



Doug Turpin
To: Doug Turpin

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Wed 9/15/2021 6:55 AM

 Refocus Latin Executive Committee Presentation 8.24.21 v5 presented to the Board.pdf .pdf File

 Source Documents for Refocus Executive Committee Presentation 8.24.21.pdf .pdf File

 Inappropriate book passages (515 KB)

From: Doug Turpin

Sent: Sunday, August 29, 2021 6:29 PM

To: REDACTED

Cc: Chuck B REDACTED

Subject: Latin Board Meeting follow up

Denny, first I wanted to thank you and all of the members of the executive committee of the Board for meeting with fellow parents to listen to our concerns. Mike, thanks so much for setting up this meeting and gaining us this audience. We absolutely understand and appreciate that all of the members of the Board are volunteers, who are donating their time to help Latin make the best decisions about the education of our children. For that, we thank you.

I would like to make sure you are all aware, that while we only had 10 people who were allowed to attend this meeting, there is a much larger group that also wanted to attend. As discussed, this group was one that organically met to collaborate this summer on what was presented. These parents have spent a substantial amount of time creating this presentation (attached), as well as the source materials that I am also attaching. They have spent countless hours comparing notes, understanding the issues, and speaking with many other parents on phone and Zoom calls. I personally spent at least the equivalent of two full work weeks focusing on the issues we are bringing to the Board and Administration's attention. I would venture that John spent even more time than I did! I know that many others also worked as volunteers, donating large amounts of time to put together these concerns, as well as to talk with other concerned parents. What is motivating parents to gather and speak out, is the very high level of concern that has emerged regarding the school's direction, which appears to be a radical shift in the policies and curriculum toward a highly politicized, progressive left educational posture. This is not consistent with the promises we were all made, to have an apolitical educational environment, based on measuring everyone in a nondiscriminatory fashion, with merit being the sole means by which children or faculty are measured. This concern is combined with what we see as a breakdown in the basic foundation of a parent school partnership, exemplified in the lack of willingness of the Administration to meaningfully respond to, or in some cases, even meet with parents that have concerns.

A key goal of our initial meeting, was to outline our concerns and then schedule a follow up meeting with the Board where we could begin to understand if they felt like these were valid - or not - as well as what their plan were to address any of them. We wanted that to occur in the spirit of the longstanding parent school partnership, where we worked out these matters within the Latin family. To hear at the end of the meeting that neither the Board nor the Administration was willing to have any further meetings with our group was beyond disappointing and disheartening. It was the worst outcome I could have envisioned. To ask everyone to take any concerns they have in the future to Chuck and Fletcher seems dismissive, and not a good policy outcome. We did not wish to open the door to a situation where we could potentially have a large number of parents independently flooding the Administration, or the Board members, with emails, calls, and or requests for meetings. I am still hopeful that the Board will change its mind and determine that dialog with parents as a group, is a better way to go. However, since that is not an option for now, I would respectfully ask that both the Board and the Administration individually address the following issues, in a written reply to my email, so we can understand where things stand. We can then present that information to the larger group we are in communication with.

- **The Video.** The first topic is the video the school created, that effectively accused Latin of being a White Flight School, with therefore racist origins. (See Attached Source Documents.) John's father, a prior

Board Chair, wrote a letter to the Board about this topic that went unanswered. John, and many others, have raised this issue with the Administration and members of the Board. They, and all of the Latin community, are due a written official response. Does either the Board or the Administration believe this to be a true depiction of the origins of the school, or is it false? If it is false, will the Board and the Administration respectively acknowledge that a mistake was made, then take steps to set the record straight? It is imperative to a lot of people that we know where Latin stands on this issue. It can not go unaddressed any longer and it is not going away without being addressed.

- **Politics.** The next issue is politics in the school. We were told Latin would be an apolitical school. We were told that no one should be able to know where a teacher stood on matters of politics and that there affiliations would not be visibly advertised in any fashion. At our meeting, Chuck did say he agreed that Latin should not have politics in the school. This then lends me to ask, what is the definition of what is political? From my viewpoint, the issues we outlined in the PowerPoint are clearly political. What we need to understand is, what is the view of the Board and the Administration regarding this? If the line was crossed, what are the steps that will be taken to correct this? To understand your perspective, if the Board and Administration could each address these situations below, I would have the information necessary to understand your positions on these matters.
 - In the sixth grade Humanities class last week, three separate days were spent on the subject of “being Woke” and they watched this video. I received a text from a parent with this on it. “In Citizenship they read the book Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice”. I will attach an excerpt read by the author. This is truly unbelievable! **Why do we need to see everything from the lens of race, gender, and label children – or worse ask them to label themselves?** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olhMOLVy9Hc>” **I implore you to please listen to this video, at least for the first 3 minutes.** My son is in this class, so I have personal knowledge of what happened. Is this political or not?
 - Anyone who watches the news, is aware that there is a highly political debate going on in this country over the issue of gender identity, labeling, as well as how it should be handled. In my personal opinion, I think everyone should be treated with respect and welcomed within society without regard to any aspect of how they identify themselves or their gender identity. My concern is with how the school is approaching this, as I do not view it as the proper role for the school to be driving the conversation **proactively** with children, or forcing them to change the use of pronouns across any topic they are addressing, in verbal or written communication of any type. This email was sent by a 6th grade parent “I just received a call from my wife advising me that my daughter was told by her sixth-grade science teacher that, when writing, they were not to use the pronouns he and she, but rather it and they.” Separately, the 6th grade humanities class did a gender identity exercise, where they were asked to identify themselves by their preferred pronoun. This is massive departure from all prior practice. It is throughout the school, across many grade levels and comes with a focus on asking kids to label themselves by some kind of gender identity, which is a major platform of the more radical elements of the progressive left. This has been very confusing for our son. Does the Board and the Administration consider this political and/or appropriate?
 - Some DEI organized faculty groups read books which included topics on, “How to be an Anti-Racist”, White Fragility, White Privilege, and support for the BLM movement. Communication from the school had similar messaging. Is this political?
- **Merit.** I see a lot of communication from the school about “Equity”. Equity, as it is commonly used today, means to state that there will be an “equality of outcomes”. The concept of Equity takes merit out of the picture in terms of objectively measuring achievement, then replaces it by lowering criteria for one group to give them an advantage over other groups, which is thereby actively discriminating against the others. I grew up with the goal of pushing for **Equality**, in which everyone was measured by the exact same criteria. Anything else was overt discrimination. My question is, has Latin lowered any standards for any group of children, or its faculty, in the name of Equity – or for any other reason? Is this concept of Equity political? Additionally, if Latin does keep its DEI position, can we rename it to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion?

- **Parent School Partnership.** The school has always stated that it is open to and welcomes the opportunity for meeting with parents about any issues of concern. My wife, Nicole, is a Doctor. She and I asked to have a meeting with the group that created the policy on masks for Latin. We stated that we would bring other people in the medical field, as well as other parents, to provide information and feedback. We spent a great deal of time carefully researching information we wanted to share, some of which we attached to the email we sent requesting the opportunity to meet with Latin. We were simply looking for a chance to meet, discuss our thoughts, and share what we had learnt. We were told no one would meet with us, the school saw no reason to hear what we had to say about this issue, their minds were made up, and it was pointless to spend time talking to us about a policy that had just been put into place. I can send the dialog if you wish. Does the Board think this is in keeping with the Parent School partnership, to refuse to meet with parents and discuss the schools policies? If not, will it direct the Administration to have the meeting we requested?
- There were excerpts from books provided for Latin children to read that had:
 - A graphic description of a man raping a child via sodomy and another of a man raping a women, a book called The Kite Runner. (Excepts attached).
 - A girl discussing the idea of having sex with her boyfriend and being advised by her friend to shave her p**** first. (In the presentation attached).

Is this appropriate, and if not, what steps are going to be put in place to better vet children's books in advance, hopefully with the advice of parents included in selecting these going forward? Personally, I would not let my children read such books and do not understand how this fits into the traditional classical education Latin has stated it is providing.

Chuck, at our meeting you made a comment that I did not quite understand. You stated that there was 90% that you agreed with and 10% that you did not. I do not know if your comment was referencing the school's web site foundational direction, the topics of the material we provided to you, or something else entirely. Can you tell me more specifically what you meant by this? We received no real feedback from the Board or Administration during our meeting and no follow up is occurring, which is why I am sending this message now.

While I have many other examples, these are sufficient for me to understand where both the Board and Administration stand. I thank you for your attention to these questions and I look forward to each of your written responses. I think many parents are now in the previously unthinkable and life disrupting position, of having to evaluate whether Latin has left them to become another type of school entirely, one that focuses on radical progressive issues over educating our children, which is forcing them to consider alternatives to being Latin Lifer's. Additionally, Alumni are also having to reevaluate if the school is an institution that they can continue to support with their gifts. Your answers will provide clarity for us.

Regards,

Doug Turpin
CEO - Venture Group



From: Denny OLeary
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 12:57 PM
To: Doug Turpin **REDACTED**
Cc: Chuck B; **REDACTED**
Subject: Thank you



I just wanted to say thank you again for last night. As was shared at the conclusion of our meeting, your passion for Latin

shown through in your preparation and presentation and we appreciate you bringing your concerns to the table. Please know – above all – that we are all fully committed to ensuring Latin stays true to its Mission and upholds its Core Values.

On a more personal level, as both an alumna and parent, I woke up this morning as optimistic as ever about our beloved school. The power of that which binds us – notably our commitment to the enduring and foundational principals of Latin, as expressed in our Mission and Core Values and, as Melinda powerfully noted, our shared mission to serve our children – will fuel the continued success of Latin through a dynamic and ever-changing world.

Sincerely,
Denny