

**Brookline School Committee Statement in Response to
Recent Racist and Anti-Semitic Incidents and Student Walkouts
Voted March 24, 2022**

The recent incidents at Brookline High School are the latest examples showing that racism, sexism, antisemitism, ableism, anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, xenophobia, and other forms of bigotry and harassment across all of our schools must be combated with renewed urgency and vigor. We are proud of the students who organized and participated in last weeks' protests. In so many ways, they are leading the adults; we are grateful for their advocacy, but they are children under our care who rely upon us to foster a school environment of safety, respect, and dignity.

As the elected officials overseeing the Public Schools of Brookline, we are ultimately accountable for the school system and the success of every student within. And we can and will do better.

Specific actions we will take, starting immediately:

- We will pursue training in anti-discrimination and anti-racist leadership for the School Committee, and routinely refresh this training.
- We will empower the superintendent of PSB to embed diversity and a commitment to inclusion, equity and justice across every element of the district's strategic plan to be developed this year, and we commit to identifying or reallocating resources to support this work. The superintendent's evaluation rubric will explicitly include Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEI-J).
- We have established a subcommittee on anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion and justice that will include in its charge an action plan for the School Committee, aligned with the district strategic plan. As a part of this plan, the subcommittee will explore ways to address not only overt forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and harassment, but also micro aggressions and implicit bias.
- We will review the PSB Policy Handbook through an equity lens, including possible formulation of an anti-hate speech and iconography policy.
- We recognize the importance of having a School Committee, an administration, and a teaching staff that are more representative of the families that we serve. As a first step, we will explore ways to empower traditionally marginalized communities with opportunities for direct participation in School Committee affairs, including but not limited to appointment of liaisons from these communities (e.g., METCO).
- We will work with PSB administration to ensure clear and transparent mechanisms for reporting racism, bigotry, discrimination, and harassment against students and staff.

These actions are important district-wide, pre-K through Grade 12, and are aligned with the Committee's legal powers and duties to evaluate the superintendent, oversee and approve the district budget, and establish district educational goals and policies.

For those who are skeptical of this commitment - we hear you: the School Committee has not always led in this area, and will certainly make mistakes. We look forward to continued open dialogue with, and feedback from, the PSB community.

Finally, while we are ultimately responsible for PSB, we ask the caregiver community to partner with us and with PSB staff: make clear that there is no place for racism, sexism, antisemitism, ableism, anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, xenophobia, and other forms of bigotry and harassment of any kind. Through the home-school partnership, we can work together to promote a safe school environment that embraces the identity and individuality of every student.