

Draft School Committee statement for review March 22, 2022

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The recent incidents at Brookline High School remind us that the scourges of racism, antisemitism, ableism, bigotry, harassment and discrimination 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 week's protest. 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.

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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 SC, and routinely refresh this training.
- We will empower the superintendent of PSB to embed celebration of 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 identify or reallocate resources to support this work. The superintendent's evaluation rubric will explicitly include DEI-J.
- We will establish a subcommittee to develop a diversity, equity and inclusion action plan for the SC, 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 formulation of an anti-hate speech and iconography policy.
- 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 a METCO liaison.
- We will work with our district partners to ensure clear and transparent mechanisms for reporting racism, bigotry, discrimination, and harassment.

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Anti hate speech and iconography policy¶

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These actions are aligned with the Committee's legal powers and duties to oversee and approve the district budget, and establish district educational goals and policies.

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

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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, antisemitism, ableism, bigotry, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination, or harassment of any kind. Through

the home-school partnership, we can work together to promote a safe school environment that respects the identity and individuality of every student.

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