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Concerns and Suggestions for Leadership Stability, Transparency, and Retention

1 message

Katrina Lawton Photography <katrinalawtonphotography@gmail.com> Tue, Apr 8, 2025 at 8:56 AM
To: Michael Totman <mtotman@bbrsd.org>, mgrill@bbrsd.org, Lori-Anne Hart <lhart@bbrsd.org>, jdeglialberti@bbrsd.org, lmair@bbrsd.org, emancini@bbrsd.org
Cc: Nicole Bilotta <Nbilotta@bbrsd.org>, Albert Ganem <aganem@bbrsd.org>

Dear Members of the School Committee & Superintendent Ganem ,

I am writing as a concerned parent and community member regarding the ongoing turnover in leadership within our school district. Over the past few years, we have seen multiple principals and multiple superintendents in quick succession. This instability raises significant concerns about the environment and retention of new leadership, as well as its impact on the education and well-being of our children.

With the active search for a new principal underway, I worry the process may be rushed, leading to a less-than-ideal outcome that could put us in the same position in another year or two. I urge you to consider appointing an interim principal from within the district as a temporary solution. This would allow us to conduct a more thorough search for a permanent candidate while maintaining continuity and stability in the meantime.

Additionally, I believe we need to examine the compensation for the principal position. How is the salary 40K different from one town over? A competitive salary is critical for attracting and retaining high-quality candidates. Offering a more robust salary package would help ensure that a chosen principal commits to the district long-term. Who is responsible for making decisions regarding principal salaries, and has this been evaluated as part of the current search process? Addressing this could be a key factor in resolving the cycle of turnover we have been experiencing.

Similarly, the search for a permanent superintendent is critical. The superintendent who is ultimately selected should have a voice in choosing the future principal. Their collaboration will be key to building a cohesive, effective leadership team that can address the district's challenges and set a positive trajectory for the future.

Transparency is another pressing issue that must be addressed. Unfortunately, the lack of clear communication has allowed rumors to fill the void, creating unnecessary drama and division in our small town. Moving forward, I believe the School Committee and the superintendent must prioritize clear, consistent communication with parents, teachers, and the community.

In addition, we have been asked to remain quiet on social media regarding ongoing issues, but I would like to know if School Committee members are also held to the same standard. Some of the political posts from members seem concerning for a role that should remain unbiased and focused on serving the entire community regardless of political views.

Specifically, I ask that you:

1. **Develop and share a detailed plan of action** to address these concerns. Simply acknowledging that we have been heard is not enough; we need a concrete strategy for improvement.
2. **Engage parents and teachers in the process**, as their insights are invaluable. Teachers, in particular, are on the front lines of our children's education, and if they are unhappy or leave, our students suffer.
3. **Make School Committee meetings more accessible** by scheduling them at times that accommodate the broader community, not just committee members.

Ultimately, we all want what is best for our children. Professionalism, accountability, and transparency are essential to fostering trust and minimizing the "smoke and mirrors" that fuel community discord. By addressing these issues proactively—and ensuring compensation packages reflect the value of the leadership roles—we can work together to create a stable, supportive environment for our students, staff, and future leaders.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I look forward to hearing your plan and seeing positive changes in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Katrina Lawton
Parent of a 1st grader at BES, a 6th grader at Tahanto and a soon to be Kindergartener in the fall.
508-579-8383 Please reach out if you have any questions.