everywhere here are beautiful thoughts expressed on car fenders

Seth Cable

Dear Editors,

I am writing to express my dismay and my disgust over the divisive and disrespectful rhetoric that has recently been emanating from those who do not support our public campaign for the elimination of School Protocol 452.

It pains me to say this, but some parents (it seems) need to be reminded that we all love our children and dearly want whatever is best for them. Although we may disagree over how to achieve what is best, and even what “the best” amounts to, none of us are inhuman monsters deserving of being shunned, disparaged, or denigrated for our beliefs.

It was Martin Luther King Junior himself who once famously said “if we throw bricks at our enemies, then they will throw bricks back at us. But, if we throw our hearts at them, they may well throw theirs back at us instead.” The poetry of that quote sticks with me to this day. In a truly free and open society, we must listen to one another with love and open minds, and we should never seek to impede the expression of an idea, simply because we disagree with it.

I understand that many are strongly in favor of School Protocol 452. It was designed, after all, to ensure that our children all receive a quality education in a safe environment. The disappointing truth, however, is that not all children have identical learning styles, and many children are struggling under the system imposed by Protocol 452. I speak from experience, as my own child is one of the many who struggles with some of the consequences of Protocol 452. For these children, an environment that is larded with a hodgepodge of pronunciations, manners, and styles of dress is profoundly distracting and disorienting. Furthermore, for these students, the most effective means of maintaining their focus within such environments is to physically strike the sources of potential distraction. If physical contact is impossible (or proscribed), then the next best method is for those students to relieve their distress verbally, usually through vigorous vocalizations, targeted narrowly at those individuals perceived as deviating from the expectations set by their household environments.

I fully recognize that there are some children whose performance has improved after the implementation of Protocol 452, and there are families who report that their children’s overall ‘school experience’ has changed for the better. I believe, however, that there is some room for compromise between those of us on different sides of this issue. As we all know, the City has been seeking for some time now to renovate and repurpose the abandoned livestock dismantlement center near the edge of the chasm. I can’t imagine any better purpose for this structure than the education of our community’s children. Indeed, unlike other, more expensive proposals, converting the center to this purpose would require only a modicum of quite economical repairs and additions (e.g., a serviceable roof and removal of the remaining livestock portions). I would imagine that in but a few short weeks, this new school would be ready to receive all those students (and teachers) who require Protocol 452 for their educational success. Those of us, though, whose children have been negatively impacted by this policy would be willing to remain at the older school, provided that the controversial protocol...
be suspended there. Under this proposed arrangement, there may in fact no longer be any
need for Protocol 452 at all, as I imagine it's quite likely that the families whose children are
the source of distraction will opt to transfer them to the new school, removing them from the
educational environment of those others who – like my own children – struggle to maintain
focus in a non-uniform setting.

It is my fervent hope that those who have lately been writing to this publication with anger
and hatred in their hearts will hear and earnestly consider this possibility. We cannot let failed
policies like Protocol 452 tear us apart as a community. All of us on opposite sides of this
issue are doing the very best we can for our families and our children, who we love more than
anything in the world. None of us are “forces of oppression and exclusion”, which is an ugly
smear that I had the misfortune of reading in these very pages. In fact, it is this kind of rhetoric
that is perhaps the most directly to blame for the recent violence and arson in the less well-
kempt sectors of our City. Those who continue to hurl this invective at the rest of us would do
well to think on those terrible events, and reflect on whether more such tragedies are a cost
worth paying. (As others are so apt to remind us, freedom of speech does not mean freedom
from consequences.)

Sincerely,

The Inculcator Margory

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