



Wellesley Public Schools Statement on Parents Defending Education Lawsuit Settlement

Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) is pleased to announce that the lawsuit filed by Parents Defending Education (PDE) has been dismissed and that WPS has unequivocally protected its right to the use of affinity groups sessions in the Wellesley Public Schools and a bias-based reporting procedure. The dismissal is a win for Wellesley Public Schools and every school district engaged in important equity work.

Under the notice of dismissal filed yesterday, PDE is not entitled to any form of injunctive relief from the Court, is not entitled to any monetary relief, and WPS admits no liability. In addition, WPS officials had previously confirmed that, consistent with existing School Committee policies, affinity groups sessions are open to all WPS students, regardless of race, color or ethnicity, and that the Superintendent's revised procedure for reporting incidents of bias or discrimination fully protects the free speech rights of all WPS students.

The lawsuit was filed by PDE on behalf of several anonymous WPS parents in October 2021. It claimed that the district's use of affinity groups sessions to address issues of concern to minority students violated the rights of non-minority students, and that a procedure adopted by the district in the fall of 2020 for responding to incidents of bias or discrimination violated student free speech rights.

As a result of this settlement, Wellesley Public Schools remains free to pursue its goal of providing a safe learning environment free of bias and discrimination for all students, faculty, and staff.

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