

Case Study 1: “Too Much Diversity”

John is a member of the Board’s executive committee, a major donor, and the parent of one child at the school. He calls the head’s office one afternoon and shares that he has heard from several parents that the school’s spending too much time and money on diversity issues. John and these families strongly believe that for an elementary school, these are not appropriate topics for young students and, wouldn’t the school’s resources be better spent on Math, English, classroom technology and supplies, and other such subjects for which families are paying tuition?

The head listens and replies that he’s never heard this feedback, and in fact, he has heard the opposite. A few families and even teachers have recently inquired why the school isn’t doing more on issues of diversity and have asked him to respond at an upcoming faculty meeting and Parent Association meeting.

John listens and stands by his statement to the head that topics of race, gender, and so on are inappropriate for young students, and the school’s resources should be redirected to classroom subjects, supplies, and so on. He plans to bring up this topic at the next finance committee meeting.

The head picks up the phone as soon as John hangs up.

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- Given your current role, consider your response or action.
 - Are there gaps between the school’s espoused values, group norms, and shared values?
 - At which points in the story could a different approach have averted the predictable outcome?