

Town Governance Study Committee Public Input

Susan McCready

January 9, 2021

Diversity a necessity

Good Morning,

Deepest thanks for the tremendous amount of work and thought that each of you has put into this service to our community. I learned a great deal today.

We just finished the 1/9/21 session where there was a bit of discussion around diversity. I would like to emphasize that there is a tremendous amount of diversity in our public school system, much of which, from my experiences, is not fully yet represented at the school level but most definitely not at the town level. If you looked at faces on the presentation today, we all looked VERY similar.

There are some 40+ languages spoken by families of the Andover Public Schools. While the schools have done a great job in outreach with cultural and diversity celebrations over the last 10 years, language translations, and other inclusivity work, there is still much to be done. The town needs to find ways to embrace this type of outreach and inclusion as well. I know that there is a Committee in the works to do so, however I would also encourage this Committee to ensure that there is some input from these residents as you continue with your work. In talking with many of these families I can tell you that language, culture (not accustomed to having the liberties we do in this country with respect to speech and governance), and simply feeling "different" or not "worthy" must be overcome in order to be fully representative.

I'd be happy to talk further with someone on this Committee about this. I would encourage that we have some of these families come forward to express why they don't participate in town governance as another form of input. Happy to assist in engaging some families to talk with you.

My thanks again for all that you are doing for us as residents.

Susan McCready