

May 11, 2015

Bristol Warren Regional School District School Committee
151 State Street
Bristol, RI 02809

Dear Mr. Bento and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer public comment. As many of you know, for the past several months, I've been working diligently to help you educate the public on the proposed Comprehensive Assessment Policy and I have, during the course of that time, offered many of you my thoughts on the matter.

I wanted to share with you my experience as an engaged member of the public. First, I'd like to take the time to applaud and thank those members of this committee who have been respectful and open to hearing commentary, who have been responsive and willing to listen to my thoughts and who have been genuinely willing to engage in a respectful discourse.

I also feel the need to say, for the record, that not all members of this committee have been so open. When I requested the opportunity to talk to members of this committee about the very broad and critical Comprehensive Assessment Policy, I was told by one member of this committee that she was "done talking about this policy" and that we should "agree to disagree" despite the fact that she and I have never had a conversation about it. I'm grateful to those of you who listen and don't talk over those who have the floor, those who refrain from eye rolling when someone is expressing a dissenting opinion and those who see, as I do, their role on this committee as a public service.

I come here and spend my time talking to you about issues that mean a great deal to me for the betterment of our community. I have but a few minutes to give you my comments in a setting such as this. To deny me an audience or to make it abundantly clear that you aren't going to try to understand or actually listen reflects poorly on the committee as a whole, and I believe discourages others from coming forward to share their viewpoints. Civil discourse, particularly among those who disagree, is a cornerstone of democracy. I believe that the work of this committee is crucial to the social and economic vitality of our community and I look forward to continued respectful discourse with you in the future.

Thank you,

Tracy Ramos