

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Statement by Mary Turner at Mountain Brook Schools BOE Meeting on July 12, 2021

My name is Mary Turner and I have three children in the Mountain Brook School System. We moved to this community in part to alleviate my husband's work commute, but also for the education of the district. Having been raised by an early childhood educator and former chemistry teacher, for me the quality of an education is of paramount importance. Without hesitation I think we can all agree unequivocally that we want the best for our children. We want to protect their innocence and shield that innocence from "life." But, for our family, we value more than just good grades and accolades - we want the educators in our district to feel supported and have the necessary tools at their disposal to assist us in raising tiny humans that are accepting, kind, and compassionate.

My children are bi-racial and self-identify as being both West Indian and American. I am acutely aware that their lived experiences are unlike mine in several ways. I am also aware that living where we are they do not have the luxury of being asked how they want to be identified, and society's knee jerk reaction will be to label them. The danger with using labels (abled/differently abled, them/us, liberal/conservative, left/right) to identify people is that once we have labeled them conscious efforts to see them as individuals with complex personalities and histories begin to degrade.

Recognizing when the information we have at our disposal is antiquated is a skill and, with the right training and education, steps can be made to help us learn from our mistakes as these are pivotal in the learning process. A topic is only as divisive as one makes it and difficult conversations are only difficult because one is afraid to have them. For some to assume that children lack the emotional capacity to learn about any and everything is not only untrue, but it speaks volumes about where their levels of comfort lay.

Confession, I too struggle, even on topics that have been demystified. But change is one of the most profound absolutes in our universe that transcends ethos and ideology; and if, as a community, we are truly invested in educating this generation and the next, we need to work with our educators to move beyond our status quo by giving our children the knowledge and tools to confront not seeing others as mere labels. Our children should learn to address these difficult topics in a fair and educated way, and that requires ALL OF US working together diligently to forge the best way forward.

Thank You

### About MB Listens

MB Listens is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, grassroots organization that is striving to ensure that everyone is accepted, welcomed, and treated equally in Mountain Brook. To learn more about MB Listens, please visit us at [www.MBListens.com](http://www.MBListens.com) or [www.facebook.com/MBListens](https://www.facebook.com/MBListens).