

08/31/2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Eric Knox, the father of Ian Knox. I am writing regarding our recent decision to send Ian to De La Salle North Catholic High School. Our family moved back to Portland from Los Angeles in December of 2012. One of our main priorities was ensuring that our kids lived in a neighborhood and attended schools that would expose them to a healthy community of African-Americans. We lived in NE Portland prior to our move back home to Los Angeles in 2004, so returning to the NE corridor made sense based our experience being a part of that vibrant community.

Upon our return to Portland, we began to notice how much the community changed due to gentrification. In spite of this new reality, we decided to remain in NE Portland because it still had the highest percentage of African-Americans in the city, and we felt it was the best place to raise our children. As we began to explore schools, one of our main objectives was to make sure Ian had both a solid academic and athletic experience. We wrestled during his 8th grade year on whether or not to apply to Central Catholic High School because our oldest daughter is enrolled there and has had a wonderful experience and could help with driving to school. Although Central is a great fit for our daughter who is an A student, we wrestled with the wondering if it was the right fit for Ian. We moved forward with admissions even though we knew that the size and the lack of diversity might be a challenge for him.

We forged ahead in preparing him academically and athletically. Ian is passionate about soccer and he looked forward to playing on the high school team. But after two days of tryouts, he learned that he did not make the team. Naturally it was a struggle for him, and for us as a family. This served as a catalyst for us to re-evaluate our decision to keep him at school with his older sister. Firstly, we have learned that Ian's best learning environment, both in the classroom and on the sports field, is realized when they are coupled together and mutually incentivized. For him to not have a sports experience and to be a minority would have devastated him. Secondly, we wish for Ian to attend a school filled with kids and teachers that specifically speak to his experience. This will help reinforce positive images of his culture that we try to instill at home. Thirdly, Ian has never had to have a job, so we are excited about the corporate work study program at De La Salle North, which enable him to become a responsible and confident young man.

Although sports are not the main reason we decided to pull Ian out of Central Catholic, it did serve as a watershed moment for us to pause and ask some honest and hard questions about what we as a family and what Ian individually truly needs in order to have a prosperous high school experience. We believe De La Salle North is a better fit for our son. We hope that he will not get penalized because of an eleventh-hour decision made prior to even attending orientation and registration day at Central Catholic.

Sincerely,

Eric Knox

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EK' or a stylized 'Eric Knox', written over a light blue horizontal line.