



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 14, 2021

Boston School Board Members Resign After Racist Texts Made Public

Two members of the Boston School Committee resigned recently when racist texts between the two women were revealed to the public. Committee chair Alex Oliver-Dávila and committee member Lorna Rivera both left their positions effective June 8.

The racist texts occurred both during and after an October meeting — the same meeting at which then-committee chair Michael Loconto was caught on a hot microphone [mocking](#) residents with Asian names.

The communications occurred just after the committee approved sweeping changes to Boston's admission process for its elite exam schools.

"Wait until the white racists start yelling at us," Rivera reportedly texted, to which Oliver-Dávila responded, "Whatever. They're delusional."

Rivera then responded: "Sick of Westie Whites," to which the committee chair shot back, "Me too. I really feel like saying that," before adding, "I hate WR" — a reference to Boston's West Roxbury neighborhood, which is mostly white.

Rivera is an associate professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Instead of taking responsibility for her actions, in her resignation letter she chose to blame white supremacy and claimed she needed to recuperate after allegedly receiving "racist, threatening emails and social media personal attacks" from people who didn't agree with the school board dumbing down admission standards.

"Nationally and locally, there are white supremacist groups that are coordinating efforts to ban the teaching of ethnic studies, diversity and inclusion activities, and other racial equity work in our public schools and universities," Rivera wrote. "I am being targeted as a Latina gender studies professor who teaches about racism, patriarchy, and oppression."

In other words, Rivera doesn't feel she is responsible for her own racism — whites are.

Although Oliver-Dávila — who also serves as the executive director at Sociedad Latina in Boston — was slightly more apologetic, she claimed that she was bullied while she attended school in West Roxbury because of her Hispanic heritage in an attempt to explain her racist behavior.

"It was painful," Oliver-Dávila wrote. "And in the heat of the moment it caused me to vent by sending inappropriate personal text messages to one of my colleagues. I regrettably allowed myself to do what others have done to me."



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In the end, the former committee chair owned up to her racist texts even though she added caveats to her apology. “I apologize for my comments and the hurt they have caused,” she said. “I own what I said just as pain I felt that night and have felt far too often as a woman of color leading an organization committed to racial justice. The commentary of that evening brought me back to the deep shame that I was forced to feel about my language, my culture and my ethnicity. It brought me back to the shame I was made to feel about my mother who had an accent and a grandmother who didn’t speak English.”

Boston is currently in the midst of a mayoral election, and some of the candidates weighed in on the school-board controversy at a mayoral forum that took place in West Roxbury — the same neighborhood which the two committee members slandered.

“There is no place when it comes to the education of our children, from each one of our neighborhoods, that any member of an appointed board should be disparaging any member of our community,” said mayoral candidate and current Boston city council member Annissa Essaibi-George.

Another candidate, State Representative Jon Santiago, echoed Essaibi-George, proclaiming there should be “zero tolerance for that language.”

A third candidate, John Barros, the city’s former director of economic development, claimed that he went so far as to contact Oliver-Dávila about the texts.

“If we are going to address racism in the city of Boston, we have to do it as a unified community,” Barros said, to which one attendee said he would like to hear that the candidate was outraged.

“I was outraged and that’s why I called Alex,” Barros said, referring to Oliver-Dávila. “I know Alex. I called her.”

Barros did not offer a transcript of how that conversation went.

Addressing racism in Boston or anywhere else won’t happen with people such as Rivera and Oliver-Dávila in charge of things. They don’t want true racial equity. They want their own brand of racism — anti-White and anti-Asian — to be the only acceptable form of it.



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