

# The Boston Globe

## Public schools cultivate a shared ‘we’ that is vital

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Jeff Jacoby argues that letting families have expanded choices in schooling for their children will reduce societal conflicts ([“School choice keeps the peace.”](#) Opinion, Feb. 12). Jacoby quotes Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute as saying that “public schooling has produced political disputes, animosity, and sometimes even bloodshed between diverse people.” As evidence, McCluskey keeps a [“Public School Battle Map.”](#)

This is a great example of Sherlock Holmes’s comment about [the dog that did not bark in the night](#). Conflicts are easy to notice. The cooperation, cultural understanding, and society-building that take place daily in public schools are invisible.

Dictatorships, if brutal enough, keep the peace. Democracies are more messy, with multiple viewpoints and compromises needed. If we don’t engage over the future of our next generation, then what holds a community together?

I work in a school with immigrant children from many countries as well as children from all economic levels. By mixing children in our public schools, we create the bridges of empathy that allow true compromise to occur. Separating into enclaves will lead to more conflict because there won’t be a shared “we” to draw on for understanding and solutions.

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