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Tuesday, November 1, 2011

After the Scandal: ESD Needs to Go "Back to Basics"

The Episcopal School of Dallas, even though I never went to school there, is a part of my life. Its for starters, just blocks away from my home in Dallas. So its a neighborhood school that I've been aware of and passed by countless times literally growing up either by car or on foot. One of their long time teachers is one of our neighbors. We (my dad, I, and my stepmom Becky) know of two graduates from that school.

The sex scandal that I have taken about in my prior posts may be the part of what I think all institutions have to experience- mostly growing pains. One interesting comment I found comes from within the school's online newspaper from a brand new math teacher, [Clarence Davis](#). While he comments that the schools has a great academic culture and there is often respect displayed among students and faculty, he also reveals that the school apparently has had to deal with multiple issues of bullying and that was his biggest surprise. Of course, he does not point specific examples, but expresses disappointment that the school's religious culture does

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not deter this alone.

ESD while not a brand new school is relatively young still compared with many, if not most public and private schools in the Dallas area. It was established in the 1970's and its total enrollment is more than triple what it was about 30 years ago. When you walk around the school's main upper school campus on Merrill Road, there are fences-chain link or metal- of one form or another everywhere. The only thing missing is barbed wire. Not all schools, including private ones even are like this, Jesuit and St. Rita Catholic School where I went as a 5th grader 20 years ago now have some security but are not entirely fenced around like ESD. It might look at first glance to one at first a much smaller school than it actually is. You would think this school is trying to completely isolate students from the world.

The school has an endless number of clubs. [Here](#) is the long list of clubs that is already in existence at ESD just in its high school. For instance, the school is now in its third year in a culture exchange program with a school in [India](#). Plans seem to be underway to have additional students travel halfway around the world. Now, I do think its great that the school has a well-established [community service program](#). However, in the aftermath of a great scandal, is it really wise for a school like ESD to be this ambitious? I'm not a professional, but I think ESD's administration is not sure what the school wants to be. The school wants to reach out to the world, but individuals within the administration want to limit direct community participation with the school.

Bottom line, I think the kids there are overwhelmed and that the bullying and the sex scandal incident are symptoms of bigger problems there. This opinion piece from an ESD student [reinforces my opinion](#).

The school needs to determine what is really in its best interest. What is ESD trying to achieve? ESD, I think is now a big-time school with the mentality of a small-time school operation that needs to change with its circumstances to better serve its students. Yes, ESD needs to determine what basic ideas it wants to accomplish and go from there.

Posted by [Matthew Barnebey](#) at 6:43 PM 

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