

February 24, 2020

Richard Trogisch  
Principal  
School Without Walls

Re:

Dear Mr. Trogisch:

I am writing to you as a result of my family's recent experience with the School Without Walls (SWOW) admissions process. [REDACTED], is an applicant for the freshman class at SWOW for SY2020-2021, who took the admissions test on Friday, February 21, 2020. Unfortunately, the recent experiences we have encountered surrounding the 9th-grade testing process raises questions about the transparency, integrity, reliability, and overall fairness of the process.

[REDACTED]

As we are considering private, public, and parochial school options, [REDACTED] has taken many standardized tests. In the 2019-2020 school year, [REDACTED] took the following standardized tests: HSPT (91st percentile); SSAT (85th percentile); and the ERB.

## The Experience

██████████ was invited to take the SWOW Admissions Test on February 8th or on an alternate date, February 11th. ██████████ was unable to take the exam on February 8th, because ██████████ had admission activities at another prospective school. ██████████ was unable to take the exam on February 11th because ██████████ was on a mandatory 8th grade class trip ██████████

██████████ I contacted LaToya Grant, Administrative Officer and Admissions Director at SWOW on February 6th, and requested an alternate date to take the exam. Ms. Grant initially refused to accommodate ██████████ school schedule, and suggested that I “apply again next year.” I persisted, and Ms. Grant said “well ok, then come on Friday, February 21, 2020.” I did not receive a confirmation email, nor did I receive any test day instructions. I did, however, memorialize ██████████ participation on February 6, 2020, via an email to Ms. Grant.

## My Observations

On Friday, February 21, 2020, ██████████ took the test at the SWOW location. We arrived a little early and at approximately 9 a.m. about 10 students were led into a room to take the exam. I saw one student carry an opaque shopping bag (like a “Giant” food store bag) into the exam room. The students were not required to show ID to take the exam. They were allowed to bring cell phones into the room.

We left SWOW at approximately 11 a.m.. At 2:29 p.m., I received a tersely-worded email from LaToya Grant that stated in pertinent part, “Thank you for taking the time to participate in the School Without Walls Admissions Test. Unfortunately, your student did not meet the qualifying score to move forward in the admissions process.”

I have not received ██████████ scores, nor have I received any information regarding the range of scores of applicants who met the “qualifying” score and moved forward in the admissions process.

## ██████████ reflections on the SWOW Admissions Test

██████████ told me the following: 1) the test consisted of stapled paper-rather than a bound secured test booklet 2) the stapled papers were not wrapped or sealed and opened in the presence of the students; 3) there were 56 questions; 4) ██████████ placed ██████████ name of the first page of the stapled paper; 5) ██████████, there was no specific number associated with ██████████ stapled paper; 6) the answer sheet was labeled “Scantron”; 7) they were instructed to fill in a square on the answer sheet with the answer to multiple choice questions; 8) they were instructed to use the stapled test

paper for scrap paper; 9) the students were also given a piece of white paper with “Rules”; 10) it’s unclear whether the “Rules” were read aloud to the students; 11) the students were instructed to use the back of the “Rules” paper for additional scrap paper; 12) The proctor did not walk around the room, but rather "was on her computer, ” unless summoned by a student; 13) there was no deliniation or marking of the math/english sections of the test. The sections of the test were not marked “math” or “english.”; 14) the pages of the test were not numbered; 15) the front of [REDACTED] exam said “9th grade”; 16) they were given unlimited time to take the test.

### My Initial Request

Regarding the test itself, I respectfully request the following: 1) to receive and review [REDACTED]'s answer sheet; 2) to receive and review the exam; and 3) I wish to know the range of scores of applicants who moved forward in the admissions process.

Regarding the overall testing process, I respectfully request answers to the following questions: 1) what academic testing service created the test?; 2) are administrators trained to administer the test?; 3) are there written policies and procedures for test administration; 4) are children required to present ID prior to being admitted into the testing room? 5) do students have access to cell phones during the test administration"; 6) are there clear rules regarding the chain of custody for the exam?; 7) where are tests scored; 8) by what means are the tests scored; 9) who is present when tests are scored?; 10) are the test administrations randomly monitored; 11) are there test retention records policies in place? 12) is there an internal review process; and 13) which body oversees the SWOW admissions process?

I thank you for considering my request, and I trust that you understand and appreciate that I raise my concerns as an advocate for [REDACTED], balanced with a curiosity and objectivity that I trust will address some of these concerns for [REDACTED] and others.

Best,

[REDACTED]