



**J. Michael Clára**

Salt Lake City School Board

District Two

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8 May 2014

DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Laurie Lacy, Title I Director

Salt Lake City School District

440 East 100 South

Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

**Re: Title I Complaint: Parental Involvement**

Dr. Lacy,

I am forwarding a letter (with eleven pages of attachment) that I presented to the Salt Lake City Board of Education on May 6, 2014. The letter has the same date as the board meeting and is styled:

**Flawed Principal Selection Process**

I advised the school board that I believe that the Superintendent violated the district's own procedure when he recently hired four new principals to serve in Title I Schools for the coming 2014-2015 school year.

As indicated in the accompanying letter, if a principal vacancy is not filled by the lateral transfer of another principal, then a "*school selection team*" comprising of teachers, parents, and school staff is to be convened in order to "*screen and interview candidates*".

I received reports from teachers and parents of these schools, advising me that this process was not followed in the hiring of their new principal. I am also being told that one of the principals does not have an ESL endorsement, yet will be serving a school that has close to 90% students of color, many of those students have English as a second language. Can you please forward me the qualifications and credentials of those that appeared on the May 6, 2014, Human Resources Report?

The superintendent and associate superintendent advised the school board that because these Title I schools were participating in the **University of Virginia Turnaround Program**, therefore the district was not required to follow the current hiring process for principal vacancies. Two weeks prior to the school board meeting, the superintendent ignored my request for an explanation and then offered no reasonable explanation during the school board meeting as to why excluding parents and teachers from the interview /hiring process was necessary.

**"Local school boards are the bedrock of our society, yet they are invisible to the public"**

Señor Florez -Deseret News

I pointed out, that having this program in the school was a violation of the Written Agreement (contract) that the school board entered into with the Salt Lake Teachers Association. As indicated in the accompanying letter, before a program is placed in a school, it should meet the approval of the school board or the faculty of the school. This program has not been presented to either group.

The superintendency made a feeble attempt to convince everyone that this was not a "program" and therefore did not need faculty approval. Once the video of the meeting was published the following day, I received several calls from teachers advising me that the superintendency was being less than honest in claiming this is not a "program". One teacher sent me an article titled:

**U. Va's School Turnaround Program Helps Salt Lake City School District Make the Grade** UVA

Today –September 30, 2013

There are numerous other instances where this is identified for what it is, a "program". To that end, I am filing a formal complaint with your office because I believe the Salt Lake City School District, is out of compliance with the tenants of Title I as they pertain to parental involvement. As you are aware Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is a federal program designed to provide additional assistance to academically struggling students in high-poverty areas.

This program contains section 1118 called **"Parental Involvement"**, which requires that parents be involved in the formation of plans that will be at their children's school as provided in section 1112 it being titled **"Local Educational Agency Plans"**. I am including three pages that I pulled from the Title I Monitoring Handbook of the Utah State Office Of Education. It clearly states that any program coming into the school MUST include the involvement of the parents. It is clear to me, parents and teachers that the tenants of Title I were not followed when the University of Virginia Turnaround Program was brought into our schools.

I submit, that the practice of excluding the parents from helping to choose the school principal because of a program they did not agree to, is tantamount to subverting Title I's effort to provide supplemental services to our most vulnerable student population. In essence the District is sanctioning and perpetuating the existing inequities with Federal dollars.

Shalom,



J. Michael Clára  
Board Member

cc: The Honorable Luz Roblez, Utah State Senator  
The Honorable Angela Romero, Utah House of Representatives  
Mr. Richard Gomez, Director of Equity, Utah State Office of Education  
Mr. Karl Wilson, State Director of Title I Programs –Utah State Office of Education  
Ms. Sandra Sanchez, Attorney – U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Enclosures







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## U.Va.'s School Turnaround Program Helps Salt Lake City Schools Make the Grade

September 30, 2013

Children in Utah's low-performing schools are raising their scores, and with continued support from the University of Virginia's **Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education**, they are reaching new heights with record-breaking gains in achievement.

The program pairs experts from U.Va.'s **Darden School of Business** and **Curry School of Education** with school systems to institute new practices and increase student success. The approach requires work with educators at every level – from state and district administrators to school principals and teachers.

### Positive Turnaround Through Collaboration

"In the state of Utah, a number of districts had persistently low-achieving schools," said Karl Wilson, state director of Title 1 and federal programs at the Utah State Office of Education. "We have seen these schools implement the principles that were developed through PLE, and they have achieved 20, 30 and 40 percent gains in areas such as reading, language arts and mathematics."

Prior to the new school year, state and district school leaders from Salt Lake City received lessons in leadership that broadened their professional toolkits during a two-week **Executive Education** residency at the Darden School in which Darden and Curry faculty led workshops on a range of topics such as strategic planning, using data to improve student outcomes, and diagnosing and addressing the root causes of school challenges..

Their experience is now a part of Darden's many **top global Executive Education offerings** taught by some of the world's most highly acclaimed faculty.

"We offer the nation's only turnaround program that focuses on establishing system-wide changes and building transformative leadership," William Robinson, interim executive director of the Darden-Curry partnership, said.

This is the second year that Robinson has worked with the Salt Lake City group in the partnership's three-year program. He looks forward to seeing the group take their next steps toward a successful turnaround process.

When the Salt Lake City cohort finished its U.Va. residency and returned home, several of them made school site visits to ensure that their teachers were prepared to help every child learn and succeed this academic year.

"I have two cohorts," said Patrick Garcia, associate superintendent for Salt Lake City School District and district shepherd. "One is a set of schools that have been a part of this for one year, and they have their own individual program to work toward this year. And we have a new set of schools that are developing their priorities for us as a district."

"We must realize how we can support the common goals as well as the individual goals of our schools and move forward with our district priorities as well."

## **A Systemic Approach**

"Educators are like parents. They want what's best for their kids," said Barbara Kuehl, director of academic services in Salt Lake City's school district, who attended the July residency with Wilson and Garcia. "However, it's not enough to have a series of good teachers in the classroom. We need to build effective systems around those good teachers. That's where leadership comes in."

Kuehl lauded the Partnership for Leaders In Education's focus on involving all stakeholders in the process of implementing change, a task that is familiar to Dorothy Cosgrove, the recently retired Salt Lake City School District associate superintendent. Before leaving the district, Cosgrove was among the first group of leaders to implement changes developed in partnership with the Darden-Curry partnership.

"We needed to intervene quickly and do things differently," she said. "We sought quick wins by becoming data-driven, suspending beliefs and assumptions about children's learning abilities and regularly assessing the children's mastery of what was taught."

Cosgrove added that the program offers the most impactful intervention she has ever seen and referred to the Partnership for Leaders In Education leaders' abilities to listen and build confidence.

"Now, the group will go after the harder goals," she said. "They will further establish the 'Salt Lake Way' and take changes in the curriculum and the way success is measured into all of the district's schools."

Robinson added, "Our theory is that teachers and students are working in broken systems and leaders can transform those systems by re-envisioning and rethinking the design of the system, and having district and school leaders work together to ignite change."

## **Commitment to Improvement**

Since its inception in 2003, the Darden-Curry Partnership has helped to turn around failing schools across 16 states, including Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. Its goal is to work as a partner in helping school systems optimize classroom performance.



"The laboratory of school turnaround provides a great opportunity to explore education reform in really exciting ways," said Daniel Player, academic and research director for Partnership for Leaders In Education. "Many of the districts in the program are implementing changes that would benefit any school system that decided to adopt them."

However, a school district that wants to work with the partnership must first make sure it is ready. According to Robinson, districts should be prepared to take ownership of the system changes needed to create positive results.

"They need to be willing to commit to dramatic growth, to make difficult changes to establish conditions for growth, and be able to demonstrate publicly to their stakeholders that dramatic success and growth are possible," he said.

The Salt Lake City school system experienced growth in all four initial partnership schools during its first year with the program. Going forward, it must sustain its positive improvements so that all involved – especially students – continue to get high marks.

"This experience has really been top notch. It has given me confidence in terms of understanding what it is that we want to go about doing and I'm just really geared up and ready to go after it," Garcia added.

**Source URL:** <https://news.virginia.edu/content/uva-s-school-turnaround-program-helps-salt-lake-city-schools-make-grade>

## LEA Parent Policy Checklist

LEA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Citation:** Federal law [20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)] requires that each LEA that receives Title I funds develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children, a written parent involvement policy. This policy must describe how the LEA will:

**Please mark "X" for Completed**

- ☐ Involve parents in the joint development of the LEA plan annually updated in the UCA (Utah Consolidated Application).
- ☐ Involve parents in the process of school review and improvement
- ☐ Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance
- ☐ Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement
- ☐ Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as the Head Start program, Parents as Teachers program, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and locally-run preschool program(s)
- ☐ Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served
- ☐ Involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USOE/Title I Form C

## School-Parent Policy Checklist

School: \_\_\_\_\_ LEA: \_\_\_\_\_

Citation: Federal law [20 U.S.C. §6318(b)(c)(e)] requires that each school served under Title I shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children, a written parental involvement policy; agreed on by such parents; that shall describe the means for carrying out the following requirements:

**Please mark "X" for Completed**

- ☐ Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I and their right to be involved
- ☐ Offer flexible meeting times, such as meetings in the morning or evening
- ☐ Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the Title I Schoolwide Plan
- ☐ Provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet
- ☐ Provide assistance to parents, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the State's academic content standards and State and local academic assessments
- ☐ Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training
- ☐ To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, public preschool and other programs
- ☐ Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand
- ☐ Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USOE/Title I Form D



Item	Instrument	Topic	Legal Requirement	Compliant?
16	4	Schoolwide Programs	In schoolwide program schools, schoolwide plans are developed with the involvement of parents and other members of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out such plans.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
17	4	Schoolwide Programs	In schoolwide program schools, school plans are in an understandable and uniform format and are available to the LEA, parents, and the public.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
18	4	Targeted Assistance	Targeted assistance programs focus on children who are failing or most at-risk of failing to meet State standards, using multiple, educationally-related, and objective criteria.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
19	4	Targeted Assistance	Children from preschool through Grade 2 are selected solely on the basis of such criteria as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
20	2	Targeted Assistance	Targeted assistance programs use effective methods and instructional strategies that are proven by scientifically-based research that strengthen the core academic program of the school and improve the achievement of children, and that: (a) Give primary consideration to extended time; (b) Help provide an accelerated, high-quality curriculum; and (c) Minimize removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hours.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
21	2	Targeted Assistance	Targeted assistance program is coordinated with and supports the regular education program.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
22	1	Targeted Assistance	In targeted assistance schools, instruction is provided by highly qualified staff.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
23	2	Targeted Assistance	In targeted assistance schools, opportunities are provided for professional development for personnel and, if appropriate, parents, who work with participating children either in the Title I program or the regular education program.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___
24	4	Targeted Assistance	In targeted assistance schools, the progress of participating children is reviewed on an ongoing basis to make program revisions, and, if necessary, provide additional assistance to children in meeting the state's challenging academic achievement standards.	Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___