

J. Michael Clára
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District Two

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DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Heather Bennett, Board President
Salt Lake City Board of Education
909 South 800 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84105

Re: Deployment of Security Personnel?



Dear President Bennett,

In an effort to be prepared for tomorrow night's Board of Education meeting, I am seeking clarification on two agenda items:

1 -**CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:**

(B) Deployment of Security Personnel

2- **ACTION AGENDA:**

(E)(1) Possible motion to enact the Deployment of Security Personnel

I would like to have a little more detail as to what this issue is about and why does it appear on both the closed and public session of the agenda?

Is this agenda item in reference to your *"request that our resource officer, Gary Trost, come to the front of our boardroom on 3 February as a safety precaution"*¹ because *"Mr. Clara's telephone behavior was so extreme"*²? If so, I request that this issue be discussed by the Board of Education in the public session portion of the meeting and NOT in Closed Executive Session.

I also renew my inquiry (still unanswered)³ as to why the **School Resource Officer** was pulled from the last Board of Education meeting⁴ and replaced with plainclothes private security. Was this change isolated to that one meeting? Or is this a permanent change?

¹ Heather Bennett Memorandum 02/17/15

² *Ibid*

³ Michael Clara email exchange with Heather Bennett 04/29/15

⁴ See attached photograph of 04/21/15 Board of Education Meeting

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

Señor Florez -Deseret News

Is there a reason why you will not provide me an explanation? In the absence of an explanation from you on this matter, I feel compelled to bring my own security as I indicated in the email I sent to you last week.⁵

The deployment of **School Resource Officers** has been a matter of community discussion as I indicated in our February 17, 2015, Board of Education meeting. In that meeting you were dismissive of my sharing the community's sensitivities towards the police and their placement.

Contrary to your assertions⁶ that this is not a priority issue for communities of color and contrary to you accusing me of “conflate[ing]” and being “specious”⁷ on this issue, I draw your attention to recent quote by Salt Lake City Councilman Kyle LaMalfa:

*“When it comes to the policing issue, though...I've heard grown Pacific Islanders say out loud that they live in fear of the police, that the police presence is too much. He's also heard very sincere teachers and administrators argue that the full-time police officer at the Glendale Middle School busts kids for the same adolescent problems that happen at the Hillside Middle School on the east side—but, since it's Glendale, the punishments are more severe and push kids into the criminal-justice system...”*⁸


As you are aware the courts currently are reviewing the actions of the police in partnership with Salt Lake City School District:

*“...a class-action lawsuit on behalf of ethnic-minority students ... rounded up by police in December 2010 at West High School in Salt Lake City...The suit says that officers forced Kaleb, who has no juvenile record, to pose for a photo — to put in a gang database — holding a sign with his name and the word “tagger” on it. After he was released, the suit says, Kaleb was shaken, called his parents and asked to go home. The suit says that when Lisa Winston, his mother, protested what had happened officers told her the sweep was done because of ‘a problem with the Mexicans.’ On March 1, the Salt Lake defendants filed a court document admitting that police had entered the school and questioned students...they deny that they ‘acted unconstitutionally’.”*⁹

Whether in the lunchroom or the boardroom, the deployment of **School Resource Officers** is a matter of public interest and neglected public policy. The Salt Lake City School District needs to take responsibility for its actions and speak about this subject openly and transparently.

Its time that we reject the practice of subjecting students of color or their elected representatives to “racially biased police discretion” which is allowed to label us with the “stigma of criminality” which then allows others to view us as “less than human, like a shameful creature”.¹⁰

Shalom,


J. Michael Clára
Board Member, District 2

cc: Board of Education

⁵ Michael Clara email exchange with Heather Bennett 04/29/15

⁶ Board of Education Meeting 02/17/15

⁷ TribTalk: Bennett, Clara talk about issues, discord on the Salt Lake City School Board 04/13/15

⁸ Salt Lake City Weekly: To Write a Wrong –The Tragic Story of Siale Angilau 04/29/15

⁹ The Center for Public Integrity: Controversy Over Cops in Schools Flares Anew 03/05/13

¹⁰ The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

