



J. Michael Clára
Salt Lake City School Board
District Two

801-521-3223 • donMiguelSLC@gmail.com
974 S. 1400 W. • Salt Lake City • Utah • USA

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DELIVERED: ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. McKell Withers, Superintendent
% Salt Lake City School District (District)
440 East 100 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Re: Superintendent's Violation of Board Policy B-1

Dear Superintendent Withers,

I have received multiple calls from administrators advising me that in Wednesday's, General Administrator Meeting (GAM), you announced a reorganization of the District management structure by creating three new positions: Chief Academic Officer, Chief School Improvement Officer and Chief Operations Officer. I was further advised that you promoted three District employees to these newly announced positions. I am also told that Board President Heather Bennett was present at the GAM meeting when you publicly announced these appointments. Despite her presence, your actions do not have the sanction of the Board of Education. The purpose of this letter is to place you on notice that you have over stepped the bounds of your authority and you are in violation of State Statute ¹ and Board Policy ². The authority to create new positions in the District rest with the Board of Education not with the Superintendent of schools. ³ Furthermore, your actions are an assault on the Board's agreement with the Salt Lake Association of School Administrators (SLASA).⁴

Equally troubling to me, is the fact that this unauthorized act on your part, has created an "ALL WHITE", District leadership to govern a majority, ethnic-minority, student body. We now have a District with a Caucasian Superintendent. The next level down, we have a Caucasian Chief Academic Officer, Caucasian Chief School Improvement Officer, and a Caucasian Chief Operations Officer. The next level down, we have an all Caucasian School Support Staff. The next level down, would be the Principals of the five high schools in our District which are all Caucasian.

¹ Utah Code Ann. §53A-3-101 et seq., Local School Boards

² Board Policy B-1: Board of Education Legal Status, Responsibilities, and Ethics

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Written Understanding (SLASA) 2015-2016

That picture alone, is reason enough to put a stop to your unauthorized appointments. We are all aware of extremely capable African American, Hispanic, Pacific Islander and American Indian educators with a Masters, EdD or PhD degree already employed within the District, yet you cannot see your way to appoint any of them to these upper levels of management.

I recognize that it is an uncomfortable subject to broach. However, author Gary Howard tells us:

The most stable societies...are those in which negative reference groups accept the legitimacy of the hierarchical structure, thus internalizing their oppression by rationalizing to themselves their place in the scheme of thing.

As an elected representative of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Salt Lake City, I refuse to rationalize what you are trying to do. I echo the words of Dr. Howard:

Even though we sometimes may be tempted to close the discussion about White Dominance, we have a responsibility to our students to assure that we and our colleagues remain open to ever deeper levels of awareness. It is the unexamined nature of White Dominance that is often our problem...If our examination and understanding of the root causes of social inequity are too shallow, then our approach to corrective action will necessarily be superficial and ineffective. If we do not face dominance we may be predisposed to perpetuate it.

The magnitude of this proposed restructuring is a matter that should come before the Board of Education. I demand that this issue be posted on the Board's next business meeting agenda; this will allow the Board to sit in council with each other and exercise the authority that was given to us by the PEOPLE. Shame on you and the Board President for crafting this type of despicable (organizational) social engineering within our communities. I can assure you, legal consequences will follow if you do not stop this foolishness.

Shalom,



J. Michael Clára
Board Member, District 2

P.S. Please send me a copy of the organization chart you handed out at the GAM meeting. I am also requesting a copy of the qualifications of the three you announced as being elevated to the status of "Chief Officer".

