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Jeanetta Williams  
President

July 5, 2016

Superintendent Alexa Cunningham  
Salt Lake City School District Board of Education

The NAACP is committed to supporting a quality education for all children, particularly children of Color whose educational outcomes are dismal in comparison to those of their White peers.

I was recently informed that within hours of vacating his appointed office of the Superintendent, Dr. Withers eliminated the position of the Chief Equity Officer from the organizational chart of this institution. If this is an accurate reflection of what occurred, I am here to declare that his actions are in violation of the trust that the public has placed in this institution and those that lead it. I respectfully demand that this Board stand tall by taking immediate action to undo this injustice!

I say “injustice” because it was this Board, in response to community outcry and recommendations of their own employees, in January of this year, authorized a Superintendency structure that consisted of four Chief Officers on the Associate Superintendent level:

Chief Equity Officer

Chief Academic Officer

Chief School Leadership and Improvement Officer

Chief Operations Officer

By way of review, you will recall that former Superintendent Withers implemented a reorganization plan with three Chief Officers (see 10/21/15, District Leadership Reorganization chart). This plan was rejected by the community, administrators of the District and eventually this Board of Education.

In the January 2016, Board meeting held earlier this year, this Board supported and authorized a compromise plan that maintained the original three Chiefs on an interim basis while adding the office of Chief Equity Officer (see Board Minutes: 01/05/16, District Leadership Reorganization chart).

Additionally, this Board of Education accepted the “Educational Equity” recommendations put forward by a group of five administrators of this District (see Board Minutes: 01/05/16, Educational Equity and Social justice For All...).

Founded in 1909

Addition to the Official Minutes  
Agenda Item: B1  
Board Business Meeting: 7/05/2016

I share two of those recommendations this evening:

Allow the new Superintendent to set the criteria for the Associate Superintendent assignments with input from the School Board, Equity Leadership Team, SLASA' and community leaders.

Transparency and collaboration will be essential in establishing a trusting relationship between the School Board, Superintendent, educational leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community leaders.

Allow the new Superintendent to reorganize the Superintendentcy and district-level leadership with input from the School Board, Equity Leadership Team, SLASA' and community leaders

The School Board and Superintendent publically stated that the reorganization is transitional and in response to the departure of Associate Superintendent Dr. Patrick Garcia.

Making organizational changes at the midnight hour when you think no one is looking is the old way of doing business. This is a new day, we have a new Superintendent, I admonish the new Superintendent to leave the old dark ways behind and instead follow the recommendations and wisdom of these young people, make organizational changes with the context of “Transparency and collaboration...” as that allows for “establishing a trusting relationship between the School Board, Superintendent, educational leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community leaders”.

In closing, this past May 17, marked the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision that prohibited Southern states from segregating schools by race. Despite progress made because of that landmark decision, I must sadly; report that in any respects equality in public education is still elusive even in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that this Board of Education instruct newly appointed Superintendent, Dr. Cunningham to immediately restore the position of Chief Equity Officer that was illegitimately eliminated by her predecessor. Furthermore, future changes should be made with input from educators, parents, community members and with the approval of this Board of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanetta Williams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jeanetta Williams  
President