

Non-traditional Superintendent

General Tata

General Tata is to be commended for his service to the American people during his years in the Army.

Please note that Gen. Tata retired from military service as a Brigadier General (one star). He was trained and prepared to serve as an officer in the United States Army.

Although General Tata has completed a short course in the Broad Academy and spent 18 months as the Chief Operating Officer (procurement, realty, textbooks, technology, logistics, warehousing, and food service) in the D.C. Public Schools, nothing in his background of experience suggests that he is prepared to lead the largest school district in N.C. He has had no experience with instructional leadership.

In my opinion, there are many much more qualified individuals in Wake County, the state, and our nation. Traditionally, educators have begun their careers as teachers. As they continued to study and increase their experience, they have worked as assistant principals, principals, supervisors, area superintendents, superintendents, and college professors. Graduate work in school administration requires primary research, writing, internships, passing exams, and meeting requirements for licensure as a superintendent. Even with all of this training and experience, being a school administrator is a challenging position. I don't think General Tata would consider me qualified to be appointed as a Brigadier General if I had only a short course and 18 months of experience in the military.

Data are limited about the success of non-traditional candidates for superintendent. In December, 1996, a three-star Retired Army Lieutenant General(3 stars), Julius Becton, was named the Washington D.C. Public Schools' new chief school executive. His career as Superintendent of the D.C. Public Schools was brief and unsuccessful. In April of 1998, General Becton resigned, saying: "I have had it! April 30 will be my last official day of duty as the CEO." Also, in 2006 retired Admiral David Brewer was appointed to lead the LA Schools. His contract was bought out in 2008 for \$517,500. If a three-star general and a retired admiral with much more experience could not do it, there is nothing to suggest that a one-star general would have success leading our good school system to greater heights.

School administration is a difficult job even with appropriate training, qualifications, skills, and scholarship.

Gen. Tata's published works are less than scholarly and consist of novels about spies, threats, and war. His thought world does not seem to support his desire to go to the top of our profession as his starting point. I think he should work his way up in an educational system as he was required to do in the military.

I think we could do better for the parents, children, staff and taxpayers, so I will not vote for him to be appointed as the next superintendent of the Wake County Public School System.

Laurel Bond Morrison
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