

To: Christine Kushner/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff, Susan Evans/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff  
From: Anthony Tata/Superintendent/WCPSS  
Date: 02/19/2012 06:44PM  
Cc: AMajestic@tharringtonsmith.com, BoardMembers@STAFF, Cris Mulder/Communications/WCPSS@STAFF, Judith Pepler/Transformation/WCPSS@STAFF  
Subject: Re: GSIW

Ms. Evans and Ms. Kushner,

First, I deeply apologize if you feel that I was disrespectful. While straight forward, I intended no disrespect and I certainly made no accusations or allegations of conspiracy.

We have had private conversations about each of your involvement with this group where I expressed my concerns that their intent is to undermine the progress of our team as we work to do what is best for students and parents of Wake County, and each of you defended their positions. Even knowing this, I made no assumptions about your involvement in this release, which is why I asked for clarity.

My confusion as to where you stand with this group stems from when each of you only weeks ago accepted an award, in public, on stage as members of GSIW while serving as sitting Board of Education members. You both have told me today that you are not involved, but surely you can see how that action on January 30th may have led me and the public at large to believe otherwise.

Based on your public display of support for this group, I felt it was fair for me to ask the question about where you stood on their personal attack on your superintendent and our staff.

Couple this with recent revelations of secret emails and draft resolutions in December 2011 to stop the assignment plan, just days after our board retreat to discuss good governance, and I felt it was necessary to assure we are communicating openly with the entire Board. But I have heard your feedback that you prefer that I contact you privately with questions in the future. I will endeavor to do so.

I am glad to hear that neither of you endorse their position on this blatantly false press release. Of course, I would have preferred each of you made that comment to the media, as my primary concern was an implicit endorsement, which you have clarified for me today. Thank you.

Again, I apologize. My intent since day one has only been to strengthen the team, as the Advance Ed report demonstrates has occurred. In that vein, I hope we have now cleared the air so that we can work better together in a productive and constructive manner to support students and staff. We are working through difficult and important changes with the budget, assignment, and many other important matters. My team and I need your support as we endeavor to make unified decisions for the good of our students in Wake County.

Sincerely,  
Tony

Christine Kushner---02/19/2012 03:51:26 PM---Tony, I am deeply troubled by your email. Without the courtesy of a prior conversation, you have a

From: Christine Kushner/Superintendent/WCPSS  
To: Anthony Tata/Superintendent/WCPSS@STAFF  
Cc: AMajestic@tharringtonsmith.com, BoardMembers@STAFF, Cris Mulder/Communications/WCPSS@STAFF, Judith Peppler/Transformation/WCPSS@STAFF, Susan Evans/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff  
Date: 02/19/2012 03:51 PM  
Subject: Re: GSIW

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Tony,

I am deeply troubled by your email. Without the courtesy of a prior conversation, you have accused me, in an email to the full Board and your senior staff that is a public record, of conspiring with a third party group to attack your character. With all of the public records requests for Board emails, I must assume you know your broadside attack on me and another Board member is, and that you intended it to be, a public record. I believe this raises a serious question of judgment.

For the (public) record, since you have left me no alternative but to respond to the same group, I take the code of ethics for Board members seriously, and, since joining the Board, I have not maintained my affiliations with GSIW. I had not seen the GSIW press release until it was pointed out to me by someone else Friday afternoon (and not by the other Board member also accused of conspiracy).

The fact that you would make these unfounded allegations in a mass email without first raising and vetting them in a conversation with me is disrespectful and counterproductive to having a professional relationship. I have been completely respectful and open with you, even when you have had an "aggressive" (your word) conversation with me.

I do not appreciate being broadsided yet again, this time in a mass email that is a public record.

This is not an acceptable way for a superintendent to treat a Board member. I expect you to treat me and the other Board members, your staff and WCPSS employees, and parents and community members with the utmost respect at all times.

Christine Kushner  
WCPSS Board of Education  
District 6

ckushner@wcpss.net  
(919) 431-7329 voicemail

-----Anthony Tata/Superintendent/WCPSS wrote: -----

To: Christine Kushner/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff, Susan Evans/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff  
From: Anthony Tata/Superintendent/WCPSS  
Date: 02/18/2012 08:57AM  
Cc: BoardMembers@STAFF, "Ann Majestic" <AMajestic@tharringtonsmith.com>, Judith Pepler/Transformation/WCPSS@STAFF, Cris Mulder/Communications/WCPSS@STAFF  
Subject: GSIW

Christine/Susan,

I was surprised by a "press release" yesterday by a group that each of you have stated you are a proud member of and that you are actively involved in. This 'release' included several unfounded personal attacks on me and my integrity. I would hope that neither of you were involved in the development of this press release or knew about it ahead of time, but I think it is a fair question for me to ask. We have communications protocols and I would certainly hope that if you knew about this or participated in its development that you would have shared it with me ahead of time. Given each of your professed deep involvement in and adherence to the principles of this group, I am concerned that you endorse their attacks on me and my staff (unless of course you state publicly that you do not endorse them). This is the same staff that has briefed you at your request numerous times, career professionals that work hard every day to bring the best education to our students.

Truthfully, I am having a hard time understanding your public endorsement of and involvement in this group that so fervently attacks me and my staff while each of you claims to want to have a professional relationship with us. It was not pleasant to be ambushed by a bunch of reporters giving credence to the pack of mistruths in what is essentially a meaningless document whose sole purpose was to attack my character. My staff and I treat each of you with dignity and respect. We open the door for you to have access to staff at your leisure. We have worked hard to give you a proper orientation. Three days after your election we invited you inside the staff for an update on the plan. We have communications protocols that we agreed upon in the first retreat. I fear much of the hard work that Advance Ed gave us credit for over the past year may evaporate because of the potential politicization of our governance thru allegiance to and participation in politically charged groups such as GSIW. If you read the Advance Ed document, the review team warned of exactly this, encouraging the new board members to learn as much as possible as quickly as possible. As you listen to my weekly messages, you have to know that I am working very hard to do the right thing for our students, parents, and the county. Attacks on my character such as those yesterday, which each of you implicitly endorse through your association and support of GSIW, undermine our ability to move forward as an effective governance team, in my view. This is a very serious matter to me that demands some sort of discussion. And to be clear, I could not care less about their attacks on me; what concerns me is your affiliation with

this group and your implicit endorsement of said attacks and their subsequent impact on our governance and relationship with the public.

Regarding the bogus release, there are essentially three mistruths: we violated board policy by presenting the bell schedule as a 'done deal'; the new proposed bus routing system and savings is a smokescreen to hide untold hidden costs of the new plan; and that I am continuously breaking the trust of the people of Wake County.

1. Bell schedule. The truth is that we brought the bell schedule proposal two months before it is due for vote so that we could have discussion. We opened two surveys for feedback, one for parents and one for employees. We have paper copies in low income areas where internet access is not available. Under the old plan, your node got moved in Jan/Feb and then in April you learned what the bell schedule was. Like it and drive on. Now, parents have choice and they have a voice and they know what the possibility is before they make their final selection. I spent Thursday afternoon in the transportation shop going over our routing system that has not been updated since 1994. I have read many of the comments and we are reviewing the proposal for Tuesday's session. We are 110 buses inefficient under the old plan today. Add in another 40 buses of inefficiency on magnet routing where we could go to express busing and that is 150 buses worth of inefficiency. At \$30k per bus that's a minimum of a \$4.5m cost of the old plan that few ever seemed concerned about. The new assignment plan budgeted costs are far less than even just the hidden transportation costs of the old plan. With 87% of our budget in schools and in the classroom, we see updating the transportation system after 18 years as an opportunity to save money that does not impact classroom instruction. The budget is very tight.

2. Costs of New Plan. Regarding the costs of the plan, we have laid those out many times and can lay them out again. Software (\$110k), communications (absorbed internally), transportation (5-25 buses), and reinforcement of underchosen schools/regional choice schools (~\$1m). At most, the new plan will cost under \$2m, as we have stated many times before. As a reminder, the 5-25 buses are built into the new plan as a cost of ensuring stability through grandfathering. As students matriculate out, the need for those buses will decline. We know of no other costs.

3. Trust. I think Advance Ed spoke very clearly here and states exactly the opposite of what the GSIW claim is based upon thorough interviews with over 75 community members. I encourage everyone to read it, especially those that loved the first report and have yet to put any credence into the second report. I will continue to be direct and honest. I will continue to be visible in all of our schools and engage the community at their request as I have done hundreds of times. I will continue to place the needs of students and families first. And I will let the chips fall where they may.

We have many difficult decisions ahead of us and our decision making process is ill-served by endorsement of knowingly false

statements by groups vying for air time and serving their own political purposes to the detriment of our governance posture and ultimately our students.

Thx,  
Tony