

To: Anthony Tata/Superintendent/WCPSS@STAFF
From: Susan Evans/Superintendent/WCPSS
Date: 02/19/2012 01:49PM
Cc: AMajestic@tharringtonsmith.com, BoardMembers@STAFF, Christine Kushner/Superintendent/WCPSS@Staff, Cris Mulder/Communications/WCPSS@STAFF, Judith Pepler/Transformation/WCPSS@STAFF
Subject: Re: GSIW

Mr. Tata,

I am not sure that I appreciate your potential disrespect for me in implying that I have endorsed statements that GSIW released on Friday. While I have certainly acknowledged my previous affiliation with this group and defend their rights, as well as any other members of the public, to express their opinions, I am neither actively involved in their activities, nor am I given any advance notice of the content or distribution of their press releases. The first knowledge I had of Friday's press release was when a WRAL news reporter sent it to me via email on Friday afternoon and asked me if I wished to comment. I emailed her that I preferred to decline from any comments regarding it. The GSIW folks understand that my role as a school board member is separate and different from their role as a community activist group and we are all respecting those boundaries. I am disappointed that you would assume otherwise. I am even more disappointed that you would choose to send such an accusatory public group email, prior to discussing your concerns with me privately. I find this unacceptable behavior for a Superintendent to exhibit towards a Board Member and counterproductive to a respectful working relationship.

Sincerely,
Susan Evans

-----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