

To: Dr. Bill Dallas, Kristen Harris, Elizabeth Board of Education, Administration, Media     March 07, 2023

It is with deep regret that I find myself resigning from the Elizabeth School Board of Education effective March 14, 2023. My recent personal issues, and other board member personal agendas, are the two primary reasons for my decision.

Earlier last year, our Superintendent resigned and accepted a position at another school district as an Assistant Superintendent. Prior to his resignation, he told me and others that he wanted to retire from the district in about three years. In my first four years as a board member, the board worked hard for the benefit and success of the students, staff retention, and safety. All top priorities. However, board member personal agendas created an environment where the board spent more time discussing personnel issues and the presence or prevention of radical left-wing ideologies such as CRT, SEL and Restorative Justice, that do not exist in our district. If they did, the administration would take the appropriate action immediately. The board's role is not micro-management, but governance and moving the district forward. The Board has lost its way regarding our core values and Board norms, and have a difficult time in coming together on decisions that impact the success and future of our Students.

Board meetings have become chaotic and have brought behavior unbecoming of the community. "Public comment" has become the priority in Board Meetings (which I believe is important, if constructive). But that cannot consume most of our meetings.

For the record, I am very supportive of our staff and appreciate every one of them and their dedication to the students' education and success. The administrative team has done a terrific job throughout the district. Specifically, Dr. Bill Dallas, who the board voted in as the Interim Superintendent with a unanimous vote. At the same time, some members of the board did not believe that as Interim Superintendent, Bill had full authority as the district leader, and questioned every decision made. Some board members also felt that Bill is not qualified to interview and hire staff that report directly to him, and after several board trainings and meetings regarding our roles and responsibilities, continued micro-management is occurring, again causing the work of the district to move away from our mission and vision. I admit that in my years in senior management roles, I have made wrong hiring decisions, but have never hired a person into a position, then immediately questioned their ability to do the job.

We are now nearing the end of a Superintendent search. At the onset of the survey process, the search firm received 5 comments from community members, none of those reaching out to "fact check" our Interim Superintendent's qualifications or even if he plans to apply. Dr. Dallas withdrew his application on the day the Board would decide on the candidates moving forward as finalists. I only hope that the new Superintendent selection is given professional courtesy and respect from the Board, and they are given the opportunity to lead the staff and students to success without micromanagement. I completely support our selection of Superintendent.

I was voted into this office by our constituents to ensure the students and staff are successful. That was the objective in my first term and second, but am spending most meetings debating processes, policies, and trying to keep at minimum the administration and staff motivated and feel valued. At our February 27, 2023, Board Meeting, we voted 3-2 in favor of extending administrative contracts to show our support and commitment to our staff and staff retention. I considered stepping down from the Board

President role, but that would not change any of the reasons for my resignation and discord among the Board. While I have enjoyed most of my 5 and a half years on the Board, I cannot see spending full time debating issues that are not issues, spending time going back and forth on disagreements, changing agendas at a whim when the board has not had time to review the requested agenda item, etc., etc.

In the last month, I have had the opportunity to visit 3 of the schools' collaborative sessions, just to stress my support and respect for what they do every day and give them the opportunity to ask questions. There IS a fear in the schools about their jobs and future. There IS a concern about salaries and the cost of living. There IS a concern over the BOE division. But most important, there IS an unwavering dedication to the success of the students in the district. All staff members deserve an opportunity to bring forward challenges and issues to their leader without fear of retaliation.

Finally, one of our constituents commented in a recent email to the Board that "you folks are supposed to represent your constituents and not the teachers and school staff that may or may not also be your voters". I completely disagree. Without the right leadership in the Superintendent, the right teachers and support staff, we would not have the terrific team and successes we have today, teaching the basics which we all agree are critical to our kids' future.

THANK YOU to the Administration Leadership, Teachers, and support staff!

Respectfully Submitted,



Cary Karcher