

DRAFT NO. 2

Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education
Kentucky Department of Education
300 Sower Boulevard
Frankfort, KY 40601

Re: Management Audit of JCPS

Dear Commissioner Pruitt:

The undersigned members of the Jefferson County Board of Education (Board) submit this letter to you in response to your letter of February 14, 2017 to Superintendent Donna Hargens of the Jefferson County Public School district (JCPS). In that letter, you provided the results of the management review of JCPS that was conducted by Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff and advised Dr. Hargens that KDE staff and other outside professionals will conduct a comprehensive management audit of JCPS over the next few months.

We are aware that Dr. Hargens has submitted a detailed response to your February 14, 2017 letter, based on her knowledge of the matters discussed in your letter and other information supplied to her by JCPS staff. We believe that it is appropriate for us, as the elected members of the Board who have statutory authority and responsibility for the general control and management of JCPS, to submit a separate response that will provide our own perspective on the matters discussed in your letter.

We want to assure you that we are very concerned by, and take very seriously, the finding of KDE staff that numerous management deficiencies exist within the administration of JCPS. As members of the Board, we recognize that JCPS cannot fulfill our vision for the education of all JCPS students if the operations of JCPS are not effectively and efficiently managed.

First, we will respond briefly to paragraph numbers 5 and 6 in the list of management deficiencies in your letter. These paragraphs state that the Board adopted policy revisions regarding physical restraint and seclusion on August 2, 2016. As Dr. Hargens correctly pointed out in her response letter, these changes were not policy revisions that were adopted by the Board, but instead were administrative procedures prepared by JCPS management.

Next, the other issues regarding physical restraint and seclusion of students that are the basis of many of the management deficiencies identified in your letter have been discussed at several Board meetings since the data discrepancies in this area became known to us in April 2016. We have instructed Dr. Hargens to make improvements in this area and we have seen some positive changes. However, we are not fully satisfied with the speed of implementation of those improvements by management, and we recognize that further improvements must be made. We are committed that the culture and environment in JCPS regarding student restraint and seclusion, and the transparency of reporting the data, will continue to improve. Likewise, we are committed that the deficiencies in the other areas identified in your letter will be addressed by the Superintendent and JCPS staff with the implementation of sound management and educational practices.

We agree with the observation in your letter that the KDE management audit has the potential to reap many positive results if JCPS and KDE work together to build upon the positives of JCPS while creating a plan on how to correct the deficiencies so that all children can be successful. You can be assured that we, as Board members, will devote the time and resources that are needed to achieve this outcome.

Sincerely yours,

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