

January 26, 2018

Dear Columbus Municipal School District Board,

As the Superintendent of Columbus Municipal School District, I have been dedicated to providing our students with choices and opportunities that will prepare them for life after high school. This work is hard, yet rewarding and something I take great pride in doing. Recently, it has been increasingly more difficult to serve my students due to some members of the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees and Board President, Jason Spears.

Simply put, no one should have to work in a hostile work environment and Mr. Spears has continuously caused a negative and hostile working environment for myself and staff members. Specifically, he fails to follow the policies and procedures set forth by the Columbus Municipal School District's governing board. At no point should a Columbus Municipal School District Board Member communicate or give directives to a Columbus Municipal employee, unless agreed upon by the superintendent. Mr. Spears has contacted members of my staff via email and phone demanding and or commanding them do several different tasks without my approval. This has created anxiety amongst my staff and myself and has disrupted our work environment.

Throughout my tenure as superintendent of schools with Columbus Municipal School District, there have been several instances that I consider bullying and retaliatory behavior towards me. Out of fear, I have tried to ignore these issue to remain focused on serving the students of Columbus. However, this type of behavior is very inappropriate by a person appointed to represent the students and employees of Columbus Municipal School District. Therefore, I would like to formally file my second complaint against Board President, Jason Spears and ask the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees and the board attorney to take this complaint serious and act accordingly. I am afraid of Mr. Spears retaliation however, I cannot allow this type of belligerent behavior to continue. Although this hostile working environment has taken a mental and physical toll on my family and I, as a true leader it is my civil duty to bring this matter to the forefront and bring this type of unwarranted behavior to an end.

I trust that you all will take this complaint seriously and I thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Dr. Philip William Van Hickman
Columbus Municipal School District
Superintendent