

# LETTERS TO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

From Anika Whitfield

I was embarrassed and frankly, appalled by the comment that Mr. Williamson made after Samantha Toro, Rev. Maxine Allen, Ms. Vicki Hatter and myself spoke during the public comments time at the end of your agenda meeting tonight.

As I sat beside Ms. Hatter's daughter, I felt disbelief and shock after Mr. Williamson said, "I am sick and tired of hearing about the LRSD." This middle school student I sat beside appeared to not only be offended by Mr. Williamson's callous statement, but she seemed to be moved to tears. She said to me tearfully, "Dr. Whitfield, does that mean he doesn't care about us?"

I would ask that Mr. Williamson, not only publicly apologize to Ms. Hatter and her daughter who were present in the room when he spoke so firmly and callously about the LRSD, but I would also ask that he offer all of the students, parents, teachers, administrators and supporters of LRSD an apology.

We, like the parents and community members of Covenant Keepers Charter school who had been present most of the afternoon, came because we all love our schools. We should not have to be insulted for caring about our schools and district enough to come to the public State Board of Education meetings to lawfully advocate for, speak about,

and show support for them during the public comments time of your meeting. do any other community members for their schools and their school district.

On another note, as I suggested tonight, if the State Board of Education would vote to return the LRSD back to a locally, elected board of directors, then Mr. Williamson may not have to hear from the community about the LRSD as much as he has since he was appointed to the State Board of Education. As we know, to whom much is given, much is required!

I apologize if I don't have all of the board members addresses on this email, but hope that you will make sure that all receive this correspondence.

Peace and Blessings,  
Dr. Anika T. Whitfield

FROM MARION HUMPHREY

Earlier this evening, I attended the annual meeting and dinner of the Pulaski County Bar Association, which was held at the Governor's Mansion. After the dinner, Governor Hutchinson congratulated me on the victory of the Save Our Schools Committee. He was very gracious ( I, also, was seated at the McMath Law Firm table next to Sam Ledbetter, who took a picture with me and sent it to John Walker, and I sat across the table from Senator Will Bond. We are not personal enemies, and, although, we have differences of opinions, we do not make each other sick).

A number of Pulaski County judges also indicated their support for our position, and joined me in questioning why the state was closing Wilson Elementary School, if the state's objective is to have quality education. These judges are white, so this is not a racial matter. Rather, they sense that the state Board of Education is not interested in the success of the Little Rock School District. More and more informed citizens are coming to that position.

Moreover, I have thought all along that the vote to take over the Little Rock School District should not have been conducted with participation by several state Board of Education members, who had perceived conflicts of interests due to business interests of relatives, personal pursuit of new employment, and searching for program grants. The longer the current friction persists between the state board and patrons of the LRSD, the more likely it is that the public will be made aware of these perceived conflicts, leading to the loss of confidence in the integrity of decisions made by the state board.

Mr. Williamson and others should know that they are likely to hear more---not less---about the Little Rock School District. If this makes anyone ill, I suggest that the person consult with one of the many fine physicians we have in Little Rock, some of whom are graduates of Little Rock public schools.

As in many others situations of life, we would all feel better, simply if we do what we know in our hearts is the

right thing to do. The right thing for the state board to do would be to vote to reinstate the Little Rock School District Board of Directors---and to do so, when the board meets in the morning.

Marion A. Humphrey, Sr.