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June 30, 2024

Dear Respected Representatives from the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission,

Please consider this letter of intent as an application to serve, to the fullest extent of my capacity if selected, on the "Efficient and Effective School District Governance Task Force," which has been ordered by Resolution to review relevant data and testimonies, research best practices, and under the first iteration of the Task Force, devise and make recommendations for the improvement of Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) by December 1 of this year. As a member of the Kentucky business community for more than a decade, and co-founder and president of several non-profits in the state, I am submitting my application in the category of Business Member.

My attached resume demonstrates a vast "experience in the finance, management, and operations of large businesses that operate in the Commonwealth," such as Humana, JCPS, Medical Protective, H.D. Vest (a Wells Fargo subsidiary), Ryan & Co, and Digital Promotions, to name a few. I have served in a commissioned sales role for a large volume print shop in Kentucky since 2018, while running my own marketing consulting firm since 2012, and two very successful non-profits that have been focused on improving public education in Kentucky since 2015. As a self-employed business consultant, I have played an integral role in developing website applications and improving customer experience for MyHumana, Humana's health and wellness member experience platform. I have done similar consulting work for Jefferson County Public Schools, Jefferson County Teachers Association, and IPG Louisville, among others. I have also worked for two vastly different Kentucky school systems: as a K-8 computer teacher for one of the smallest schools in the state, Cornerstone Christian Private School in Lily, Kentucky; and as an academic coordinator for the lowest performing school in the largest school system in the state, Jefferson County Public Schools (this is in addition to the consulting work I did). Not to mention two additional decades of corporate marketing experience working for national financial services firms that operated in all 50 states, including Kentucky, and numerous volunteer roles in JCPS, PTA and similar supporting organizations.

I am confident I bring a diverse, well-rounded and unique set of experiences, skills and knowledge that add a great deal of value and expertise to the Task Force. As a JCPS taxpayer, parent, former JCPS employee, and current Kentucky business owner, I am invested in the success of Jefferson County Public Schools and want to do my part to ensure it serves ALL children, and not leave behind our most vulnerable students who may come from historically marginalized and educationally deprived communities. Permit me to further elaborate:

- As a former JCPS employee, I have witnessed and experienced some of the infamous “retaliation” that was repeatedly doled out by the current and previous administrations to those who stand up for students, teachers and staff in persistently low-achieving (“PLA”) JCPS schools, when no one else would or could.
- As a parent, I not only demonstrate “competency and experience or knowledge in the field of education,” my youngest son is a 2016 JCPS graduate from above-mentioned “PLA” school who went on to earn his Nuclear Engineering Degree from the United States Naval Academy (and was commissioned in May of 2020 during the pandemic!) and now serves in Okinawa as a US Marine Pilot. When I discovered classmates at his struggling JCPS school did not even qualify for PTA scholarships because the school did not have its own active PTA in good standing, I started one.
- The same school from which my son graduated is not only notorious for being among the lowest performing in the district and state, it continues to make headlines for its ongoing struggles as solutions continue to elude district leaders. The experiences I’ve documented there since 2012 are as valid as ever. The school’s historical campus recently underwent a > \$40 million renovation to repair areas that had been neglected for decades, in large part due to my advocacy, according to Dr. Pollio.
- I run several advocacy groups that focus on bringing transparency and accountability to JCPS leadership in a timely fashion, as well as improvement of public education and school communities state-wide. In this capacity, I have collected volumes of research, proprietary data and analysis, witness and victim accounts (that cannot be found elsewhere), evidence of coverups, improper abuse of authority, and more. For example, I have been compiling reports on PTA records, internal investigations, and an open records database which I will happily share with this committee, the state auditor's office, or the public, regardless of whether or not I am selected for the Task Force.
- As a watchdog for JCPS, and frequent requester of related open records, I am currently in the process of conducting my own “independent audit” of JCPS and providing as many of these details as possible to the state auditor’s office. I have gone so far as to offer to assist them with their audit any way I can, at no cost to taxpayers.
- Prior to the start of the pandemic, we elevated concerns from stakeholders as district leadership increasingly limited public input. As the teacher and bus driver shortages created more dire circumstances, solutions from the trenches never saw the light of day. My capacity as moderator for Dear JCPS has also provided me a unique opportunity to engage with members of the community across a broad spectrum of circumstances and brainstorm solutions with them. Our city’s history shows that major changes disproportionately and negatively impact our most vulnerable communities, as power brokers are poised to “game the system” to their advantage. Someone versed in these historical issues can help steer the committee away from making the same mistakes. As a former board member of the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression as well as the current chair of the Coalition for the Peoples Agenda Education Committee, this is another skill set I bring to the table.

- I have personal experience with my own disabilities and learning differences, in addition to a demonstrated understanding and history of outspoken advocacy for marginalized groups.
- The district's makeup including geography, political leanings, race, poverty, as well as disabilities (be it physical, mental and learning) needs to be considered and reflected as this committee is put together. People of color, as well as those with a proven track-record of advocating for better representation of those who have been underserved, is critical to form a just outcome that won't continuously be challenged going forward.
- It is important that the committee has members with experience in all of these areas, which is why I created an informational video and published a blog piece on the Dear JCPS website and social media encouraging others to apply for this committee.
- Examples of some of the unexplored ideas include deconcentrating some of the power of the current board by adding a number of seats so that it more closely mirrors the makeup of Metro Council. One or more student members has also been recommended.
- Another suggestion that has been circulated is adding an outside, independent investigator to the process, such as the Inspector General role and standing Task Force that oversees the police department, following similar accounts of wrongdoing and impropriety there.
- As a taxpayer, I am also concerned with the state auditor's office being tasked with spending \$1.5 million to ensure the district is utilizing our tax dollars efficiently, when a targeted independent investigation would uncover so many overlooked opportunities for far less. Patterns and practices of favorable treatment, bias, secret settlements, tampering with investigations, witnesses, and elections have been taking place with zero investigations or accountability. These known issues should be fully investigated, and perpetrators removed, so that authentic discussions and solutions can be explored.

If splitting up the district is the recommended path going forward, doing so before we uncover the extent of waste, fraud and abuse perpetrated by current leaders, risks more of the same, if not worse, because accountability will be lost. How can we expect the children in our school district to follow the rules when the leaders who run the school district don't? How can we hold students, parents, teachers, and others accountable when the people whose jobs it is (and who receive such handsome salaries and perks from taxpayer kitties to do so) continue to commit the greatest offenses? From willful educational neglect to fraud, retaliation, and discrimination, my audit irrefutably demonstrates the need for investigation and accountability before "destroying any evidence." I beg you to consider these concerns moving forward, regardless of who is selected for the Task Force.

There's no one right answer, but there are plenty of WRONG ones. Considering how fragile JCPS is at this moment, it is critical that an undertaking of this magnitude not allow any detours or permit more avoidable mistakes to be made. Our children can't wait.

Respectfully, I thank you for your consideration,

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