9178 Ringwood Road

Enfield, North Carolina 27823

August 26, 2015

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL: #7015 0640 0005 6599 4748

The Honorable William W. Cobey, Jr., Chairman

North Carolina State Board of Education

6302 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6302

Dear Chairman Cobey:

I am writing this letter as a duly elected member of the Halifax County Board of Education in response to your October 7, 2013, and August 10, 2015, letters to the Halifax County Board of Education. With me, personally, it’s about respect and recognition. And, I feel that both of your letters have been communicated in a very disrespectful, calculated, and callous manner.

If you recall, on October 7, 2013, you wrote the Halifax County Board of Education a letter stating among other things:

**The SBE is aware some members of the HCS board have been disruptive, uncooperative and obstructionist in their interactions with SBE designees and certain HCS staff. These members have created an environment that is not conducive to delivering quality instruction and negatively impacts increased student achievement in contravention of the Court’s Order. In particular, it is reported that individual HCB Board members are: (1) driving away effective administrators and teachers; (2) attempting to suspend the HCS Superintendent’s power to transfer within the district independent of board approval; (3) requesting monthly the resignation of the Board Chair and Superintendent; (4) pressuring to rehire former principals as principal or assistant principal who were non-renewed for low performance; (5) threatening or bullying district and building administrators to influence personnel actions; (6) proposing illegal and discriminatory personnel actions; (7) assuming inappropriate roles in organizing employee groups; and (8) revisiting issues after the HBS Board vote has been taken, impeding progress. In addition, it is reported that the HSB Board rehired a continually low performing principal in a central office role against recommendation of the SBE designee and the HCS Superintendent who counseled the HCS Board to eliminate the position due to budget constraints. It is clear that these actions have undermined the SBE efforts to assist you in providing every child in your district the opportunity for a sound, basic education in North Carolina.”**

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On October 8, 2013, I wrote you a letter requesting the following:

**As a duly elected member of the Halifax County Board of Education, I feel that your public pronouncements in your October 7, 2013, letter, which has been disseminated to the general public, discredit and impugn my character and standing in the community. I am not aware of Larry Armstrong, Halifax County Schools Board Attorney, warning or advising the Halifax County School Board against any of the aforementioned items in your letter.**

**The Halifax County Board of Education members are:**

* **Donna Hunter**
* **Debbie Hardy**
* **Susie Lynch-Evans**
* **Carolyn Hawkins**
* **Tyus Few**
* **Clarence J. Carmon**
* **Charles R. Hedgepeth**
* **Which individual members of the Halifax County Board of Education have been disruptive, uncooperative, and obstructionists in their interactions with SBE designees and certain HCS staff?**
* **Which individual members of the HCS Board are driving away effective administrators and teachers?**
* **Which individual members of the HCS Board have been threatening or bullying district and building administrators to influence personnel actions?**
* **Which individual members of the HCS Board have proposed illegal and discriminatory personnel actions?**

**What evidence has been provided to your office that substantiates your public pronouncements in your October 7, 2013, letter to the Halifax County Board of Education?**

**You further stated, *“…the SBE is concerned that a majority of the HCS Board is inclined to reject specific directives that disregard recommendations by the HCS Superintendent and the SBE’s designees regarding the length of employment for teacher assistants.”* Which four (4) or more of the HCS Board constitute that majority?**

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**Furthermore, you stated, *“If necessary, the SBE intends to direct its legal counsel to move the Court to broaden the authority of the SBE under the Court Order to ensure the desired educational outcomes for your students despite actions to the contrary.”***

**To reiterate, I ran in 2012 in an attempt to help remedy “academic genocide” in Halifax County Schools.**

**I await your response to my letter.**

Mr. Cobey, you never responded to my letter.

On Monday, August 10, 2015, you wrote another letter to Chairperson Hardy and the members of the Halifax County Board of Education stating:

**Dear Chairperson Hardy and Halifax County Board Members:**

**On behalf of the State Board of Education (SBE) I am writing, once again, out of the utmost concern for the children of Halifax County Schools (HCS). The SBE is united in its resolve to assist the students of HCS to receive the opportunity for a sound basic education. With the start of the 2015-2016 school year a few days away, it is clear that the HCS Board and leadership are unable or unwilling to make sound financial decisions in order to sustain a financially viable school district…**

You further stated:

**Consent order, Hoke County Board of Education et al. v. State of North Carolina and the State Board of Education, 95 CVS 1158, April 29, 2009. This Court Order was designed to enable HCS to implement a comprehensive, SBE-approved Plan to increase student performance. Under the Court Order, the SBE has authorized financial assistance, extensive professional development opportunities, instructional coaching for teachers and administrators, remediation for students and numerous other efforts to increase academic achievement. The SBE has entrusted only the most capable and experienced staff to assist.**

Your statements prove that the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are complicit in this matter.

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As shared with you previously, I have served on the Halifax County Board of Education since being elected during the May 8, 2012, Democratic Primary. Prior to my election, Judge Howard Manning declared that the Halifax County School District was depriving students of their right to equal access to a sound basic education. He described Halifax County Schools’ record as **“academic genocide.”** (See *Consent Order, Hoke County Board of Education et. al. v. State of North Carolina and the State Board of Education, 95 CVS 1158, April 29, 2009.*)

Now, with having served on the Board of Education for three years, I am persuaded that the **ROOT** of this “academic genocide” is potential fraud, waste, abuse, misuse, and mismanagement of public funds.

Again, I ran for office in 2012 to help remedy this “academic genocide.”

Hopefully, you will begin treating us with respect and recognition as equals.

Sincerely,

 /s/

Charles R. Hedgepeth

Member, Halifax County Schools Board of Education

cc: Honorable Chief Judge Donald Stephens, Wake County Superior Court

 Members of the State Board of Education

 June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

 Elease Frederick, Halifax County Schools Superintendent

 Larry Armstrong, Halifax County Schools Board Attorney

 Laura E. Crumpler, Special Deputy Attorney General

 Dr. Nancy Barbour, NC DPI Director of District and School Transformation

 Vanessa Jeter, NC DPI Director of Communications