



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2017

CONTACT: LaToya Henry
(313) 447-6404

OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT SEARCH FOR GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

DETROIT – The Detroit Public Schools Community District continues to face challenges as well as opportunities to both stabilize and move our school district to higher academic heights. It is a school district that has been plagued by financial, academic, and personnel obstacles. The newly elected Board of Education is to be commended for its efforts to bring to solvency, as well as to re-establish the school district of Detroit into a first class, academically proficient, and student-learning center for the people in this community. In order to accomplish these goals, it is important for everyone to remember that the citizens of Detroit, for the past 16 years, have not had the ability or authority to control and make decisions about the public-school system in this city. It has been under the control of emergency management rather citizen input. In addition to this critical factor, please consider the following:

1. Our school board members have only been in office since January 20th of this year.
2. Our district continues to face the mounting challenge of financial inadequacy and possible deficit which threatens the viability of the district.
3. Teacher shortages are still quite apparent in the district.
4. The proposed closure of 24 schools throughout our community looms over our head like an educational guillotine ready to fall.
5. The Financial Review Commission, state-appointed, continues to overshadow, monitor, and ultimately determine key decisions such as the time for the selection of a General Superintendent that we believe is unreasonable.
6. Attendance at school, along with special educational challenges, continue to be priorities for a board and a district that is still trying to navigate its direction.
7. The demographics of the city of Detroit, both social/economic, should also be considered as a priority in factoring such a key decision as the General Superintendency.

When one looks at these issues, the selection of a General Superintendent for the city of Detroit is indeed critical in ensuring the future success and significance of our district.

-more-

We believe that it is unreasonable for the Detroit board to be compelled and basically be given very limited time by the Financial Review Commission and the state to select a superintendent for the people of the city of Detroit. Members of the board have not had an adequate time to really get control of the key issues in this district as well as to assimilate the essential knowledge and issues facing the areas previously discussed. In the face of this reality, it is our belief that the time for the search for the General Superintendent should be extended, and that the pool of candidates should be deeper.

We do not stand here today at the behest of any particular candidate or for any specific nominee. Further we are not attempting to determine for the board who they should select as General Superintendent. However, as stakeholders in this city and in our district, it is important that we do identify our concerns. It is our belief that the pool of candidates now offered, and in particular with the withdrawal of Mr. Orlando Ramos of Milwaukee, presents a clear opportunity for us to have a more diverse and an even greater list of candidates for consideration. This is not to say that neither Dr. Derrick Coleman of River Rouge or Dr. Nikolai Vitti of Jacksonville, Florida should not be considered. Of course, they should be continued on in this process. Our call is to simply take a deeper look and to extend the time so that Detroiters will have the opportunity for the best possible candidate to serve our city as General Superintendent.

Therefore, we call upon the state of Michigan, led by Governor Rick Snyder, and the Financial Review Commission, led by Mr. Nick. A. Khouri, to work with our school district in support of the direction of the newly elected Board of Education. The citizens who live in this community, following nearly two decades of external control of our educational destiny by the state of Michigan, deserves the respect and the cooperation of those still making decisions over the future of Detroit children.

###