

South Orange Maplewood Educational Association Vote of No Confidence Resolution

Whereas Dr. Ronald G. Taylor is employed as the current Superintendent of the South Orange Maplewood School District ("SOMSD" or "District") and is tasked by the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education ("BoE") under his Employment Contract with, among other significant responsibilities, the "administration of the affairs of the school district, including but not limited to programs, personnel, fiscal operations, and instructional programs," and

Whereas the mission of SOMSD "is to empower and inspire each student to explore and imagine, to pursue personal passions, and to collectively create a better future by creating a learner-centered environment through multiple pathways; re-imagined structures, systems and supports; innovative teaching; partnering with families; and maximizing community expertise and resources," and

Whereas over the last two plus years, from July 1, 2021 through present day, Dr. Taylor's administration of District affairs has broken down trust, disregarded collaboration, and failed to provide full and open communication among District stakeholders, instead breeding feelings of neglect, distrust, and ever-increasing intentional disrespect for their voices, expertise, and resources, and

Whereas, in totality, the behaviors, actions, and omissions under Dr. Taylor's administration have been contrary to the best interests of the District and have included:

- Unilaterally pursuing a revised policy of equity and access, calling for the elimination of academic levels throughout the District without collaboration with all stakeholders and without providing any specific plan or protocols or budget for the implementation of said policy, and then doubling down on his so-called autocratic exercise of power to adopt a policy of his choosing without any need to hear the opinions of stakeholders when the BoE reasonably demanded evidence that he had collaborated with stakeholders before a first read of his proposed revised policy, and
- Fabricating a confrontational relationship between labor and management, most recently evidenced at the October 18th BoE meeting when contrary to Dr. Taylor's bald assertions without names or date that math teachers were consulted about de-leveling, multiple middle and high school teachers affirmed during public speaks that their departments were never consulted about de-leveling and CHS had in fact attempted a de-leveled Discrete Math class with negative outcomes compared to both College Prep and Honors sections of the course, so they would never advocate for the same, only for Dr. Taylor to subsequently decry publicly he doubted the veracity of their statements, and
- Choosing to outsource transportation within the District despite a long-standing and successful practice of providing in-house transportation, thereby cultivating personal relationships between District employees and students, only now to have students missing material parts of the school day due to repeated late arrivals as a result of convoluted bus routes and late or lost bus drivers, only now to have our younger students experience anxiety and humiliation at having had bathroom accidents due to prolonged bus routes where they could no longer hold their pressing need to empty their bladders, only now to have younger students exposed to empty liquor bottles when these third-party buses were not cleaned prior to retrieving our students, and
- Implementing an integration plan whose intended effect was to create greater equity between students in the lower socio-economic stratum with those in the middle and upper strata, except Dr. Taylor's plan has had a negative impact on the students the plan was meant to help, as evidenced by the disproportionate number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch

being made to travel outside of their neighborhood at greater distances and times to attend school as well as failing to provide the necessary academic support services these vulnerable students need at their reassigned schools, and

- Failing to remedy the lack of several special education teachers in classrooms across the District where students are entitled and the District is legally required to furnish a certified special education teacher despite knowing that special education was deficient in numbers at the end of last year to cover the current special education population and even though they were testing several additional students over the summer who would likely need special education services for the school year, and
- Promising stakeholders last spring a five-day CHS Freshman Academy to address the achievement gap and the ever-increasing needs of students for social-emotional learning and executive function skills, only not to collaborate with SOMEA regarding the assignment of staff to this Academy until after school started this fall, only not to furnish any curriculum for said Academy to this day despite his administration assuring SOMEA in writing that the BoE had approved a curriculum for the Academy, and now taking the position that a curriculum is not needed to instruct students, and
- Neglecting to pay teachers for additional hours worked, in some cases for months despite the fact that administration was aware beginning at the start of the school year that these teachers would cover additional classes over their regular workload as the District was unable to hire or retain necessary teachers, and
- Encouraging a laissez-faire approach to maintaining and fixing our facilities and grounds by disregarding repeated and ongoing notifications of infested and leaking and broken facilities so that staff and students alike have gone home with their property and body crawling with insects and having developed physical symptoms in response to poor physical environments, evidencing how inept Dr. Taylor is at supervising Grounds and Facilities, failing to hold them accountable in performing their operational duties, perpetuating ongoing health and safety violations throughout our grounds and buildings, and
- Aiding and abetting the decline of rigor within the secondary levels of the District by rubber-stamping a credit recovery system for close to 700 NCs which allowed for individual assistant principals to devise separate criteria for each grade level to recover credit, including allowing students to sign-in to the CHS library and auditorium without any supervision, without completing any work, and without consulting any teachers to receive academic credit, such fraud doing injustice not only to those students who completed the necessary work for credit but also harming these students who still lack the necessary instruction they need for future success, and
- Further aiding and abetting the decline of rigor in contradiction to the specific recommendations of Dr. Fergus by reducing the final average a student needs to receive academic credit for a course to .50 despite a D- being the quarterly equivalent of a .67, lying to the public and our students about their college and career readiness, and
- Losing hundreds of teachers who have left the District in growing dissatisfaction with the day-to-day management and policies under Dr. Taylor's regime, pursuing positions in higher-paying districts where they feel recognized and appreciated, and
- Neglecting to notify teachers of the need to move their carefully created and valuable classroom resources, only to have those teachers return from summer break and realize they are without the resources they need to teach students because they have been haphazardly thrown in boxes, misplaced, or broken, and
- Refusing to provide SOMEA members with an itemized paycheck so that they can determine whether they are actually being paid for extra hours worked and despite teachers finding

examples where they were underpaid by hundreds of dollars only after repeated demands that the payroll office identify the hours included in their checks, and

- Authorizing the hiring of new teachers in direct violation of the terms of the District's Collective Bargaining Agreement with SOMEA, in many cases at salaries well in excess of what is being paid to the long-term teachers of the District who already felt overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated by the District.

Whereas Dr. Taylor has engaged in the foregoing behaviors and actions in the midst of increasing teacher's shortage when a positive and rewarding work environment is essential to attract and retain highly qualified teachers, and

Whereas it is in the interest of all stakeholders for SOMSD to be a compassionate and collaborative environment to provide the best possible education for the students we all serve.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the members of SOMEA have NO confidence and NO trust in the Superintendent to effectively lead SOMSD, and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of SOMEA respectfully and willingly submit this vote of No Confidence to the BoE, and

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that SOMEA urges the BoE to provide immediate notice of non-renewal of Dr. Taylor's employment as Superintendent and to transfer administration of the District to capable hands because the students and staff of SOMSD deserve better.

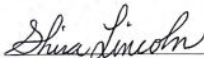
We, as the undersigned Executive Board of SOMEA, proclaim No Confidence in Superintendent Ronald G. Taylor, Ed.D.



Rocio Lopez



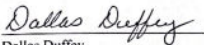
Patrice Massung



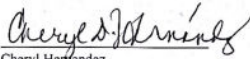
Shira Lincoln



Kristie Thomas



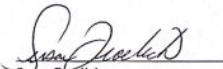
Dallas Duffey



Cheryl Hernandez



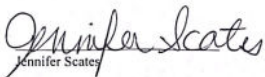
Laurie Pham



Susan Froelich



Josue Martinez



Jennifer Scates

Michelle Rhodes*

*In abstentia



Pat Hurley