

January 24, 2022

Dear Superintendent Truitt:

I am requesting a formal investigation into fraud and misconduct by the Wake County School Board, focusing on the actions of the board's chair, Lindsay Mahaffey. The board was tasked with appointing the vacant District Four seat. By a vote of 7-1, a candidate who does not reside in Wake County was appointed, which is obviously against policy.

While the candidate, Craston Artis, had put a fraudulent Wake County residence on his resume, the board did not authenticate his residence. During a school board meeting, a parent raised questions about Mr. Artis' address and therefore eligibility to serve as the District Four representative. Chair Mahaffey then agreed to give Mr. Artis an extension to produce proof of residence, which should have been provided during the interview process. After a week, Mr. Artis could still not produce evidence of residence. Mr. Artis' estranged wife finally came forward to the public to reveal Craston Artis lives in Goldsboro, Wayne County. Mrs. Artis also said her husband knew two to three weeks before the interviews he would be chosen as the appointee, raising not just ethical, but legal questions. Clearly the process was fixed, warranting an investigation.

When parents enroll their children in Wake County schools, they are required to produce proof of their residence with a utility bill no more than 30 days old, or a lease agreement. The Wake County School Board apparently only requires an address on a resume for school board appointee candidates. Parents are expressing the feelings of certain rules for the general public, and other rules for those in power.

It has also been revealed Mr. Artis' consulting firm was paid by Wake County Schools for services, causing some to raise even more ethics questions about favoritism.

As a Wake County School Board candidate, I am receiving concerns from the community about the mishandling of this appointment, and neglect to do a very basic residence check. The school board's own policy states members of the board must live in their district, which is why they turned away another candidate who did not live in District Four. The board played political favorites with a former business associate, while rejecting another candidate who had the same terms of disqualification as Mr. Artis.

From all that we know, this process has been corrupt, deceitful, and an insult to Wake County residents. It was just one week ago two board members were confronted by community members for supporting a social media post mocking some Wake County

parents, painting them as extremists. This form of bullying is also against board policy. The Wake County School Board is set up as a non-partisan body, but time and again they show political favoritism, and distaste for their constituents.

We must have an investigation into the Wake County School Board for their mishandling of the appointment of Craston Artis, as this clear corruption and negligence is eroding the voters' trust, and violates citizen rights to a fair process. Chair Mahaffey has not expressed culpability, and instead remarked "We learn and move on." What she has learned is people are paying attention and fraud will not be tolerated by citizens, and will hopefully not be tolerated by the Department of Public Instruction. I will repeat the stunning revelation that Artis knew of his appointment possibly, three weeks before all the candidates were vetted - this is compelling and must be addressed. We are counting on you to investigate further.

In light of the overwhelming evidence, Mr. Artis eventually withdrew his candidacy. I trust you will confront this situation before a new candidate is chosen, so the board acts appropriately, and honorably this time around.

Sincerely,

Steve Bergstrom

Cc: Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson