

February 18, 2014

Robert P. Queen
2632 Pamlico Drive
Shelby, NC 28152

Dear Mr. Queen,

Thank you for your request to be added to the agenda for the February 24, 2014, meeting of the Cleveland County Board of Education. The agenda for the Board meeting focuses on student achievement, school system leadership, teacher tenure, school system transportation, and make-up days for the recent winter storms. In preparing the agenda, Dr. Boyles and I have reviewed your request and have decided that it does not warrant inclusion as an agenda item. Thus, your request is denied.

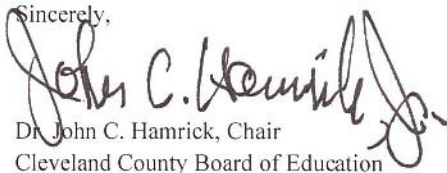
We are denying your request for several reasons. First, and most important, the school system does not have the resources available to answer your questions. As explained in Dr. Boyles' letter, doing so would require that the school system divert its limited staff resources away from students and toward responding to your questions about the school system's fiscal operations. Ideally, the school system would have sufficient resources to staff a communications office that could respond to your questions. Unfortunately, the school system does not have these resources and must focus its efforts on furthering its mission, providing an exceptional educational experience to Cleveland County's nearly 16,000 students.

Second, the school system does not have a legal obligation to answer your questions. The school system's legal obligation in this regard extends only so far as to afford you with access to its public records. As superintendent, Dr. Boyles is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the school system, which includes responding to citizens' requests for public records. In that capacity, and in an effort to address your concerns while also acknowledging the school system's limited resources, Dr. Boyles treated your questions as a request for public records and identified and provided you with records he believed to be responsive to your questions. He also informed you of his willingness to provide you with additional public records at your request.

Finally, the school system is not in any way attempting to keep secret its fiscal operations. As a public entity, the school system's records are available for public inspection, its annual audits are available online, and its Board meetings are open to the public. Moreover, the Board has recently reviewed and revised its fiscal policies and internal controls to ensure that its limited resources are used efficiently. While we regret not having the resources available to respond to your questions, we cannot afford to compromise the school system's primary mission by diverting resources away from educating students.

After carefully reviewing your request, I am fully confident that Dr. Boyles' response was appropriate. He is an experienced administrator that works diligently to comply with the law and always acts in good faith. I am also confident that Board action to approve his response does not warrant inclusion among the agenda items at next week's Board meeting.

Sincerely,



Dr. John C. Hamrick, Chair
Cleveland County Board of Education

pc: Board of Education