

2632 Pamlico Drive
Shelby, NC 28152

February 24, 2014

Dr. Jack Hamrick - Chairman
Cleveland County Schools BoE
400 West Marion Street
Shelby, NC 28150

Dr. Hamrick,

I received a letter from you dated February 18th denying my request to be put on the agenda for tonight's meeting. You indicated that the school system does not have the resources to answer my questions because doing so would pull the staff away from the students. Secondly, you stated that the Board was not legally obligated to answer any questions other than requests for public records. And lastly, you said that the school system was not in any way attempting to keep its fiscal operations secret because records are available to the public, financial audits are available online, and the Board meetings are open to the public.

I had a response ready for your three reasons, but I think the words of two elementary school teachers express the point better than I can. Yesterday, my wife asked two teacher friends why they didn't attend board meetings. One of the teachers said that it was very apparent that the administration and Board did not want to hear from them so they just didn't go to the trouble of attending. The second teacher sent a text that I am quoting from. She said - "Lots of money is wasted high up and it is completely hidden. Walk in the beautiful newly redone county office and check out all the new furniture. New flooring and new computers. 2-3 per office. Then come to my room with mildew growing on the ceiling and computers from 2002 and chairs and desks from when I went to school there in '83! That's sad, but at least the county office staff is comfortable."

There's an old saying in military circles that the troops eat first and the officers eat last. That apparently doesn't hold true in the school system. There's absolutely no excuse for students and teachers to sit in a room with mold and mildew while money is continuously being spent on this building.

Whether you guys want to admit it or not, you have an image problem with the teachers, parents, and taxpayers of Cleveland County. Maybe not all, but certainly a significant percentage. That's why I submitted the questions to you - to give you an opportunity to explain yourself. For whatever reasons, you refuse to respond with anything other than copying documents. You should understand that your refusal to answer does not make the questions or those asking go away. It only adds to their resolve. Let it be known that you were given ample opportunity to answer legitimate questions about the operations and expenditures of the Board and school system. I expect you will be hearing more.

Respectfully submitted,
//signed//

Robert P. Queen