

2632 Pamlico Drive
Shelby, NC 28152

March 24, 2014

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

Dr. Hamrick,

As you know, I have submitted several requests to the Board seeking information regarding various actions and expenditures made by the Board and CCS personnel. While I have received some information in the form of public records, there has been no real attempt to completely answer my questions. Your responses thus far indicate that you are not legally obligated to answer except to provide access to public records. While your position may be technically accurate, I do believe you have a moral obligation to the taxpayers of Cleveland County to justify your actions and expenditures.

I understand some of you believe that most of the citizens of Cleveland County don't care about what has happened in the past and they want to move on. You can see by the number of people gathered here tonight that the citizens of Cleveland County do indeed care about what THEIR school board is doing. I encourage the Board to talk to these folks after the meeting and hear their concerns first hand. For the guests who are here, I encourage you to be polite but be willing to express your concerns precisely.

In the last two weeks, copies of several questionable receipts have been published online and discussed on a local cable TV channel. Since this has happened, I understand there may be a few more board members interested in looking into the expenditures. We encourage you to do so. We realize that an audit and investigation will be embarrassing to those who have done things improperly. We are sorry for that but we didn't cause these things to take place. It would be nice to have all of this taken care of before the new superintendent gets here. We should clean up our own mess.

To use a popular cliché - We're all in this together. The Board is elected by the citizens of Cleveland County to oversee the education of our children and the operation of the school system. You represent us and are responsible to us to see that everything is done properly. When you fail to do what's right, you fail the students, the teachers, and the citizens.

My recommendation to the Board is that you do whatever is necessary to audit the questionable credit card purchases. CCS has an internal auditor on staff that should be able to perform or oversee this work. The Board should ask the District Attorney to proceed with action on the SBI report generated as a result of investigation into school system purchases. I am still asking for a response to the questions I submitted at the January 13 board meeting. Other than the questions about expenditures, it should only take a few hours to answer the remaining questions.

Please keep in mind that there are other concerns beyond the credit card purchases. Citizens are concerned about the condition of our school buildings, prioritization of capital projects, and perceived favoritism in personnel actions. I know you take selection of the new superintendent seriously. You should definitely consider what your selection will tell the citizens of Cleveland County.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert P. Queen