



TANGIPAHOA PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

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MARK KOLWE
Superintendent

ANN A. SMITH
President of the Board

July 15, 2010

Nelson D. Taylor, Sr., Esq.
928 St Charles Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301

Dear Mr. Taylor:

In accordance with the court's Order (R. Doc. No. 866), I am responding to your letter dated July 14, 2010. Therein, you object to my decision to recommend a white male for the principal position at Hammond High School.

My decision was based in part on the recommendation of a majority of the members of the interview committee that Mr. Troxclair was the superior applicant for the position, my personal knowledge of both the black applicant recommended by the committee under the terms of the said Order and Mr. Troxclair, and my personal interview with the black applicant recommended for the position following the interview process.

As you may be aware, there are significant problems at Hammond High School at this time. These consist primarily of low academic performance by the students, divisions within the ranks of the faculty, and student disciplinary issues. In the judgment of the majority of the interview committee members, and in my judgment, Mr. Troxclair is in a superior position to address each of the problem areas at Hammond High School. This is based upon his exemplary work as an assistant principal at Ponchatoula High School and my interview following the committee's interview with the black applicant.

Under the new school desegregation plan (R. Doc. No. 876), Hammond High School is destined to be school system's flagship high school housing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the Medical magnet. Under the new school desegregation plan, all administrative and faculty positions at the school will be declared vacant once the magnet programs are introduced. See Paragraph 2(C), R. Doc. No. 876. These programs are planned for introduction at the commencement of School Year 2011-12. Accordingly, a final consideration in my decision to recommend Mr. Troxclair to the school board to assume the duties of principal at Hammond High School is to recommend the person best qualified to assure the success of the magnet programs and to avoid the need to have a change in the principal position two years down the road.

As stated in my July 8 letter, of the nine administrative level positions that have or will be filled, seven have or will be filled by black professionals. This to me, does not evidence a pattern of appointing whites disproportionately to administrative level

positions or otherwise seeking to circumvent the court's Order. In short, if the Order is to mean what its language expressly states, I must have the discretion in limited and unusual circumstances to recommend a white applicant when that applicant has superior qualifications and is better suited for a particular position.

Sincerely,



Mark Kolwe
Superintendent

MK/sc

c: James A. Gray
Arlene K. Gurerin, ESQ
Thomas Bellvia, Assistant Superintendent
Lionel Jackson, Assistant Superintendent
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