



Striving for Justice

J. K. Haynes Legal Defense Fund
928 St. Charles Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
Phone: (225) 356-5252
Fax: (225) 612-6612
e-mail:
jklegal@bellsouth.net

Nelson Dan Taylor, Sr.
Chief Counsel
Cell: (504) 214-7109

July 16, 2010

Mr. Mark Kolwe, Superintendent
Tangipahoa Parish School System
59656 Puleston Rd.
Amite, LA 70422

Re: Superintendent's Proposed Recommendation for Appointment of a
Principal at Hammond High School

Dear Mr. Kolwe:

I reviewed your letter dated July 15, 2010, responding to my previous objection to your recommending Chad Trosclair as the principal of Hammond High School. I am deeply disappointed in your response. Before equal opportunity can become a reality in the Tangipahoa Parish School System, school officials must first recognize and acknowledge when equal opportunity is being denied. No Black person has ever been given the chance to succeed or fail as principal at Hammond High School. Indeed, the Black applicant here would have to accept the position under the horrific obstacle of the Superintendent's hostile prediction that she will certainly fail, to wit, your comment:

Accordingly, final consideration in my decision to recommend Mr. Trosclair to the school board to assume the duties of principal at Hammond High School is to recommend the person best qualifie3d 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.

Not only do you give a crystal ball prediction that the Black candidate will fail, you telegraph an intent that she would be removed even if appointed—while expressing absolute certainty that the white candidate, Trosclair, would continue without interruption after the magnet school plans are implemented.

Your comments make clear that the Black candidate would be an "African-American first" in Tangipahoa Parish who would have to

function and succeed under unfair, hostile scrutiny. Some in the Black Community describe what you are doing as the "Jackie Robinson" syndrome. You impute the successes of Ponchatula High School to Trosclair, while imposing the failures and incompetence of the previous white Hammond High principal on the Black candidate. What you are doing is outrageously unfair.

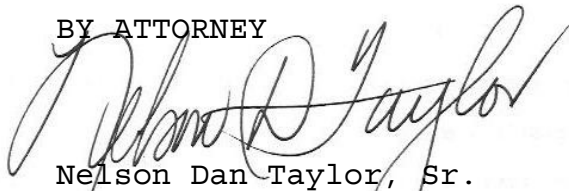
You are obviously an advocate for Trosclair—and I suspect that your advocacy has roots that began growing long before the interview process for the position at issue. Be reminded that you were selected as superintendent, notwithstanding your lack of credentials, training, or experience in education, and you assumed your position only after a waiver of qualifications. Then perhaps you can understand why I am especially leery of the predictions, conclusions, and evaluations that you have created to satisfy your personal, subjective, ad hoc definition of "superior" qualifications which exclude a Black applicant with impeccable credentials and experience.

I continue to object to your recommendation. You misunderstand the purpose and intent of R. Doc. 866. There is nothing in either of your letters that identifies any superior qualifications of Mr. Trosclair. No Black person has ever been appointed as the principal of Hammond High School. A qualified Black applicant who you describe as having "significant skills and capabilities" is available. You have said nothing that justifies denying her an opportunity to become the first Black principal at Hammond High School.

In the interest of fundamental fairness, I urge the school board to reject your recommendation.

Sincerely,

BY ATTORNEY



Nelson Dan Taylor, Sr.

cc: Tangipahoa Parish School Board
Charles Patin, Esq.
James A. Gray, II, Esq.
Ashley Sandage, Esq.
Thomas Bellvia, Assistant Superintendent
Lionel Jackson, Assistant Superintendent
Arlene Guerin, Compliance Officer
Dr. Lynell Higgenbotham, Chief Desegregation Officer