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Clayton County Board of Education · District 8

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The Mark Elgart-driven SACS report concerning the Clayton County Board of Education is a sham and a farce. Not one time did Mr. Elgart show any unbiased even-handedness. For example, a fellow school board member sent Mr. Elgart a scandalous smear sheet full of lies and distortions about me, and Mr. Elgart, apparently because of his bias toward me (and perhaps my employer), took this scandalous smear sheet and, without examination of the facts, puffed it up with great ballyhoo. Yet, I responded with a detailed, twelve page, single-spaced document with 17 exhibits demonstrating who the real culprits are on the Clayton County Board of Education, and Mr. Elgart just benignly ignored my response apparently because it undermined his pre-conceived and prejudiced notion of what was going on in the “lowly” Clayton County. (My response can be found on *TheTeachersAdvocate.Com*.)

Mr. Elgart apparently has an inordinate desire to go light on the school board member who is most culpable of micro-managing the school system – the Chairperson herself, Ericka Davis. (Ms. Davis also happens to be the only school board member who was a member of the previous Clayton County Board of Education which ran afoul with the snooty and snobbish SACS in 2003.) To this day, Mr. Elgart has not sent an official copy of my detailed, four page document which chronicled MY two official complaints against my fellow board members, Ericka Davis and Rod Johnson, to Superintendent Duncan, as he did the scandalous complaint against me. He just ignored my official and legitimate complaints. No excuse. No explanation. No investigation. In fact, when he sent his “inquisition team” to Clayton County to “investigate,” not one question was asked of board members or staff members about my serious allegations against two of my colleagues, and when I tried to show the so-called investigators the evidence which I had in my possession, they blithely waved me off. They did not want to be confused with any facts.

It is easy for Mr. Elgart to use his bully pulpit to beat up on a school system for working stiff. Clayton County is an easy target to use to try to scare other school systems. (After all, SACS needs a whipping child since it is a private organization and certainly not the only accrediting agency in town nor the only one which qualifies students for the Hope Scholarship.) Clayton County is a colorful county full of honest and proud people. You won't see any of us at the swanky Piedmont Driving Club or the Atlanta Steeplechase. We are, however, a hopeful people, trying to build a better future for our children. We need less finger-pointing from the likes of Mr. Mark Elgart and SACS. Our people understand the “rough and tumble” side of politics where opposing views have to compete in the marketplace of ideas. Our school board does not need to be a “garden club,” serving tea and crumpets. What's wrong with serving up competing ideas, vigorously debated with robust speech? Mr. Elgart does not need to wag his

prejudicial finger toward Clayton County while refusing to lift his arrogant finger toward his own county which, by the way, went through a slew of superintendents in a matter of months. (Do you reckon any “micromanaging” was occurring during this upheaval? Not a peep was heard from Mark Elgart.) Just like his Alpharetta neighbors want their children to employ the Hope fund to attend the University of Georgia, then so do our humble parents want to use this same money for our children. After all, it is our people who fund the lionshare of the Hope Scholarship.

Clayton County is tired of being Mark Elgart’s proverbial whipping child. We understand that Mr. Elgart was personally offended when certain school board members took umbrage at him showing up and speaking at our September school board meeting. (This is just another example of how Chairperson Davis manipulates matters. She solely invited Mr. Elgart to our meeting, without any input from the Board and without him being on the Board’s agenda.) We hope that his personally being offended has not clouded his judgment but it looks as if it has. The welfare of our children appears to be a low priority for him, despite his many “I care for thy children” pronouncements. We are a little too jaded in Clayton County to actually hang onto Mark Elgart’s every word as if it were law and gospel. We live in the real world and have to demand that our children be treated fairly. Our children rightly deserve equal protection under the law, both Georgia and Federal laws. The “Standards” by which Mr. Elgart judges the Clayton County School System should also be used to judge other school systems, including his own.

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