



*“Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year.” – WEB Dubois*

To: The Fairfax County Public Schools Community and General Public

The leadership and membership of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators (FABSE) are looking forward to working alongside the incoming superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools to realize our aligned mission to create a caring culture of equity, inclusion, and high academic standards in an effort to realize the Division’s Portrait of a Graduate ideals where ALL students are resilient and goal oriented, exhibit world class communication skills, understand the importance of collaboration, are critical and creative thinkers and ethical global citizens.

We are looking for the next superintendent to be collaborative with a multitude and varied number of communities and organizations, including those representing the African Diaspora ensuring that Equity, Culturally Responsive Instruction, and Social and Emotional Learning continue to be developed as a comprehensive model to ensure the academic success of ALL students.

FABSE continues to believe our [Big 8 priorities](#) provide a roadmap for Division leadership and the Fairfax County Public Schools’ Board of Education to achieve our shared goals as educators. The next superintendent should be aware of the persistent issues in FCPS, a few of which include the hiring and retention of African American educators, ensuring a positive work climate for African American employees, addressing discipline disparities and ensuring positive and productive family engagement to name a few. This division, under current leadership, has led the way locally and nationally on these fronts. We want this to work to continue to be developed and enhanced.

Considering the recent report from the Fairfax County NAACP, FABSE also has concerns that we will not have a superintendent that will be able to address the varying needs of our membership and those of faculty, staff, and students across the Division. Parenthetically, as an organization primarily comprised of African American educators, we value and respect the work of the NAACP. This is an organization with a long and storied history of fighting for the rights of ALL Americans. It is an organization born out of W.E.B. DuBois’ Niagara Movement for civil and educational rights. The NAACP has been engaged in this work for over 110 years.

Please let it be understood that FABSE members and leaders understand the sensitive nature of personnel matters; however, if the reports are accurate, we believe the FCPS School Board has missed an opportunity to bring aboard a proven leader with a track record in divisions similar in size to FCPS. In a division where meritocracy is often valued and championed AND benchmarking with districts similar in size and scope as FCPS in a multitude of instructional and operational decisions, this body believes FCPS has missed a critical opportunity demonstrate our professed beliefs. It is now public information that the two finalists for the superintendent position in FCPS were Dr. Cheryl Logan, Superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, and Dr. Michelle Reid, Superintendent of Northshore School District in the state of Washington.

Without being privy to the interview process, we believe that the body of work (academic performance data) and the makeup of the divisions that were led by Dr. Cheryl Logan more closely align to the needs of Fairfax County Public Schools.

Not only was Dr. Cheryl Logan, Superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, exceptionally qualified, she also happens to be a woman of color. In addition, in a day and age where the accomplishments of African American women are often overlooked or outright questioned, FCPS had an opportunity to hire the first African American woman to lead the Division, providing inspiration to young girls of all creeds and races in the DMV area. We only need to look to the recent appointment of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the United States Supreme Court to realize the power and inspiration that comes with ensuring ALL students see representation at all levels of leadership in FCPS. We also know and understand FCPS is a leader in the state of Virginia and the nation. Indeed, the state looks to us for leadership, aspiration, and inspiration.

The members of FABSE would like to understand the hiring criteria and process of selecting the next superintendent of FCPS. Like the NAACP, our membership was asked to provide input on the characteristics of the superintendent that we'd like in FCPS but were not invited to be a part of the interview panel. Representation, "being in the room", is a critical strategy in ensuring the voices and perspectives of all stakeholders are affirmed, respected, and included in the decision making of the Board.

Finally, the members of FABSE want the board to know of the fear and possible ramifications that speaking out and being critical of FCPS may have on this body. The great James Baldwin once said, "I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually."

The members of FABSE share this sentiment when in respect to FCPS. We believe in the Portrait of a Graduate, the work of Equity and Inclusion, Social and Emotional Learning, Literacy, Culturally Responsive Instruction, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and our constant reflective mindset that drives us as an organization to "see" each student and provide an education tailored to meet his or her individual needs. We stand ready to partner with the Division in realizing our professed goals and aspirations. We believe these principles and ideals do not fight against the tenets of rigor and academic excellence; they simply enhance our efforts. We believe in our work. We believe in FCPS!

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

FABSE Membership

Cc:

Chair Stella Pekarsky  
Vice-Chair Rachna Sizemore Heizer  
Board Member Megan McLaughlin  
Board Member Elaine Tholen  
Board Member Melanie K. Meren  
Board Member Tamara Derenak Kaufax  
Board Member Ricardy Anderson  
Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders  
Board Member Karl Frisch  
Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra  
Board Member Abrar Omeish

Board Member Laura Jane Cohen