

To: Dr. Kamela Patton, Superintendent of Collier County Schools

From: Stanley Walkiewicz, Director of Facilities for Mason Classical Academy

Date: June 6, 2020

Re: Deterioration of Mason Academy

Dear Dr. Patton,

It is with great frustration and sadness that I need to address to you the difficult situation that is ongoing here at Mason Classical Academy in Naples, Florida. I would first like to say that I believe with my whole heart of the program here and its educational value to Collier County. The teachers here are the very best that I have witnessed in a public and private school setting. The curriculum is of the highest degree possible and the engagement of teacher and student success is second to none. However, the administration practices here are extremely hostile and unprofessional. But, before I share with you the situation here, I would like to give you a little background information about myself.

I am not originally from Naples, Florida. I was Chief County Detective for the Erie County District Attorney's Office in Erie, Pennsylvania, where I dealt specifically with child abuse and child homicide investigations for fifteen years. I was also the executive director for the Erie County Children's Advocacy Program. I started this program with \$1.00 in the bank and that program still remains in operation to this day, now named as the Bradley Foulk Child Advocacy Center, named after our late District Attorney. In addition to my Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, I also hold a Master's Degree in Public Administration. I know more about child abuse and operating a center than I care to remember.

I came to Mason Academy with one specific goal. I wanted to use my knowledge in the building trades business to work with my hands and create a better environment for the students and employees at the school. The school upon initial assessment was in medium to poor condition. As I walked the grounds, it was evident simple maintenance work was not followed. Painting was needed and holes in drywall were present. The baseboards of the school were and are discolored and

bloated by the exposure to water and other elements. The cleaning company that was hired for the school stated to me that the cleaning was substandard. This was evident by the dust, dirt and mold I found while doing my duty as running the facility. Cleanliness was not a top priority. Shortly after I was hired, Mrs. Pamela Vickaryous was named Principal. We both found ourselves in a building with a lot of secrets and little direction. (Enclosed please find a letter I sent to her, for your review.) So I will begin my situation after my letter was shared with the Mason Classical Academy School Board, which from now on I will refer to as MCA.

On May 11, 2020 I was in Mr. Hull's room for a meeting regarding the school. At that time he brought up this letter and as he described, the "elephant in the room". He expressed he was not pleased of what I wrote and was angry at the way I portrayed him. He stated that I made him sound horrible and that he didn't care for the children in the school. He stated I was wrong, and my perception was wrong. I tell you now, Dr. Patton, I must agree I was wrong, he is much worse then I originally thought! He stated that he did not want me to email him with anything I found at the school. Instead of putting it in writing, he rather, I go to him directly and present that information verbally. Also, he was empowering me to make decisions at the school that would enhance the quality of the school. Mr. Hull further stated that I would have to agree that a great deal of these problems were through the fault of Principal Vickaryous and unless I didn't see it that way, we would have problems reaching a mutual agreement with issues. Mr. Hull stated that Mrs. Vickaryous fed me lies and therefore, my perception of him is tainted by her lies. Needless to say, Mr. Hull and I did not reach a mutual understanding; however, he did state we need to get the school back in shape. Mr. Hull then stated that storage at MCA has been an issue since day one of opening of the school and therefore he did not appreciate my need to address the issue of the 'falling bookshelves' in that letter to Mrs. Vicaryous. Towards the end of the meeting Mr. Hull questioned my perception of him and the ongoing situation at MCA and stated that my having been a police officer " I should know better".

I responded to Mr. Hull that because of my background, I will plow through anyone or anything to protect children. In my career everyone talks about how bad child abuse is, but in reality, not many lift a finger to help. Furthermore, if he truly was as dedicated and caring about the school as he was attempting to persuade me to believe, why did it take my letter for him to act on these safety issues?

At the conclusion of this meeting I felt perhaps we could work in a relatively 'normal' situation. Well I was wrong! On May 13, 2020, while mold remediation work was going on by RMS Company, I approached Mr. Hull and suggested he may want to look in the recess hallway at the extensive mold issue that was uncovered. He snapped back that I was causing "mold hysteria amongst the staff and the company was dealing with it!" At this time he was with Mrs. Gina Smith comprising a 'punch list' and taking photos of areas in the building. As Mr. Hull and Mrs. Smith walked near the area of the extensive mold intrusion, Michelle, an employee from RMS, wanted to show Mr. Hull the mold. He refused to look and told her to "take care of it". Since that day, Mr. Hull and I have not spoken to one another concerning the school or my work details. Instead, he assigned Mrs. Smith and Mr. Whitehead to communicate with me.

On May 15, 2020 I was called into Mr. Whitehead's office for a meeting with Mrs. Smith. At that time I was handed the 'punch list' which is attached to this letter. While reviewing the list, attention was drawn to removing shelving from the top of Ms. Molan-Young's cabinets. Mrs. Smith stated "they are unsafe". She stated the installers told her that the cabinets in the building are not screwed into the studs and therefore, no weight should be on top of them. She said she needed to remind the teachers not to place anything on top. (Shouldn't it have been placed on the 'punch list' as a priority, to fasten the cabinets to the studs???) Also noted on the list is to remove shelves from the 'drum room'. As directed, I removed the plastic shelving units from the 'drum room' and placed them near the area of mold remediation. I also removed a gas powered pressure washer that was placed in that room by Mr. Hull and I left it in the hallway so it would be noticed. On May 11, 2020 I took a photo of that power washer that was stored in the 'drum room'. Two quarts of oil were with it and yes, there was gasoline in its tank. It wasn't until May 18, 2020 that Mr. Hull removed the power washer from the school building and placed it in his vehicle. It should be noted that throughout this time, Mrs. Gina Smith, the Quality Control Manager for MCA, walked by that gas power unit daily.

On May 22, 2020 Mr. Whitehead appeared in my office and requested all my files that dealt directly with my reporting to any outside agency from my department. I turned over the files for reporting fire drills to Collier County School District, health inspection records and fire inspection records. I was informed that Mr. Hull

instructed Mr. Whitehead to assume those responsibilities, so I can focus more on maintenance at the school.

Since the May 22nd date, all outside contractors are now being handled by Mr. Whitehead and Mrs. Smith. I am not to have any involvement with these contractors, especially the ones who are dealing with the mold issue. The floor waxing company has been in and Mrs. Smith is dealing with them. On June 6, 2020 a mold testing company came in and Mrs. Smith directed that individual around campus. Last week a Mr. Jackson was brought in to repair interior drywall, and he was directed by Mrs. Smith. It would seem to me, that the person with the most knowledge of mold in the building would be the individual directing these people. Maybe she knows more than me. So let's take a look at that point for a moment. Back in 2018, a Mr. Stone was contracted to do work in an office occupied by his wife. He is a painter. The drywall under the window was removed and mold and water intrusion was identified. You can see the attempt to patch the wall by the use of caulking. That did not work. RMS Company removed the drywall and found more mold and water intrusion. In the cafeteria, under the window, we found heavy water intrusion and mold. Someone previously attempted to cover the wall with a piece of plywood to stop the water from seeping in. That did not work. And in the conference room, someone sprayed foam under the base of the drywall to stop water from leaking down below the window. That didn't work either. As a matter of fact, because of that repair, mold managed to work its way between the drywall and the paint, causing more spreading and more mold intrusion. Someone knew of the existence of these issues, because attempts to fix those problems only caused more problems. During the construction phase of the upstairs bathrooms, the drain lines for the student's bathroom were designed for tile floors. Someone changed their minds and sealed the floor instead. This allowed for the drain pipe to be ¾ inch above the floor itself. Thus, when water overflows from toilets or a water pipe breakage, water will flow out into the hallways rather than down the drain as originally designed. I told Mr. Whitehead about this earlier this year and showed him what the problem was.

When I first began working child abuse cases in Erie County, I was shocked by finding that we had all these systems in place to protect children and those systems were failing. I found 'turf issues', reporting issues and people doing their job and protecting their jobs at the cost of harm to those children they were meant to

protect. I find the same situation here at MCA. People knew and know what has been going on in this school for a long time. We live in a world where if you “see something – say something” is taught. At MCA the practice of “see something- say nothing” has to leave. As adults, we are the protectors of these innocent and vulnerable children. I cannot sit back and allow this to continue. It is our moral and ethical responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

I have been told that good people have left MCA because they could not put up with the open hostility by Mr. Hull and Mrs. Smith. Mr. Hull attempts to intimidate his way in the school, and uses Mrs. Smith as his first line of offense. He is a bully want-to-be. He does not know how to run a school, let alone be an executive director. Mrs. Smith knows more and says nothing to prevent bad situations from occurring at MCA. It amazes me that Mr. Hull has to have Mrs. Smith by his side at all times. His inactions at the school only promote disharmony and contention. On June 3, 2020 I entered each classroom, asking if the teachers or teachers’ aides needed anything. I made two water runs bringing water to the teachers since they were unable to leave the classrooms. Where was our executive director? Hiding in his office.

Since the appointment of Mr. Hull as executive director, I have endured a hostile and childish working relationship. I caught Mrs. Gina Smith peeking around a corner not once but twice, watching to see what I was doing.

Mr. Hull has questioned my staff to inquire what I was working on, instead of asking me directly. After speaking to a teacher about his new house, I took him around to show him stud placement in walls. He was contacted by Mr. Whitehead and wanted to know what our discussion was about.

I was being watched on camera since no one was around us when I was showing him the plastic areas. On June 3rd after working a ten hour day, I was called at home that evening by Mr. Whitehead. Gina Smith called him stating that the cafeteria was not set up for the next day’s event. I told him it was already handled and would be ready. I came in early the next day as I had already planned and the event went as scheduled. I am tired of this harassment. Since the outbreak of the Corona Virus, no one has sat down with me to develop a reasonable response for our 2020-2021 school years. Instead, I see this administration worried about law suits and finding fault with anyone who stands up against them.

Mr. Hull refers to them as “haters”. I am not a hater, nor will I drink his Kool-Aid.

I am a protector! If you examine my history you will see I have been given local, State and Federal Awards for helping the innocent and protecting the vulnerable. I came to MCA to work with my hands and fix what was broken. Now I have to fight with words and documentation.

So the question comes to why I am writing to you? Well, I don't know the history of the situation involving MCA. I tried to stay clear as possible. However, it has come to my attention that Mr. Hull, Mrs. Smith and the MCA School Board President, Kelly Lichter, are business partners. If this is true, to whom do I go to voice my complaints? There is no independent party to listen to the events I have listed. I find it impractical to go to a group of people who clearly have information about what was really happening in MCA who have directed me not once, but several times, not to document anything in email. Mrs. Gina Smith is the liaison person between the board and MCA. She knew about the mold. Why did she not disclose this earlier? Why did the fire inspector not come into the school when a complaint was filed? Here we are June 6th and still no inspection. Had the fire inspector come in immediately they would have seen the dangerous conditions that existed as well as, Mr. Hull's gas powered pressure washer being stored in that drum room. The collusion between Hull, Smith and the MCA Board only leads me to believe that they are in violation of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). There are monetary gains to be made if in fact they really are business partners. Those gains are proving to put children and staff in danger by poor decision choices. Are they deciding to help and protect children or to gain financially from their actions?

Lastly, I must ask that my staff be protected. Mr. Hull has attempted to demean and intimidate them by his so-called 'Punch List'. He wanted the door thresholds cleaned and shiny as a number one priority. To borrow his phrase "REALLY?" With all the de-contamination we have had to do daily, the best he had to throw at us was this. He wanted, oh, I'm sorry, she- Mrs. Gina Smith wanted the classrooms put back to the original set up for the return of students to return books. We were in the process of deep cleaning all the rooms, but that wasn't good or fast enough. They - Hull and Smith, were actually engaging in a hostile attempt to get my staff either angry at me or to get them written up. The school is the best it has ever been when it comes to being clean. They work extremely hard and refuse to let me fail. Mr. Hull or the board has never thanked us for the job we have been doing during

this historic time in history. When the cleaning staff girls say "good morning" to Mr. Hull, it comes from their hearts. And yet, he ignores them as if they are begging for money. Mr. Hull has these women scared and they have done nothing wrong. They have more self-respect and dignity in their little finger than David Hull and Gina Smith have together.

Dr. Patton, I thank you for taking the time to read this letter. You may not be able to do anything. However, I just wanted it on public record somewhere, that MCA current administration does not have children's best interest in mind. I will gladly go under oath anywhere, anytime to discuss this oppressive organization.

I wish to end this letter with a quote from Mr. Edmund Burke:

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

Respectfully Submitted,


Stanley S. Walkiewicz