

#190688

## Open Letter to the Alachua County School Board

We ask that you read our Open Letter to the Alachua County School Board. If you would like to have your name added as a signer of this letter please fill in the Signer Name Box provided below. We will update the final letter with our added signatures.

Greetings,

We write as a group of citizens, Alachua County public school parents, community leaders, public education advocates, and taxpayers to initiate a dialogue, name our concerns, and to request that meaningful participation be included in equity and school governance. We are disturbed by academic performance at district schools, especially Lake Forest, Williams, and Idylwild Elementary Schools, each of which has been identified as schools "in need of intervention" by the Florida State Department of Education. We are concerned about District structures related to all schools. According to the Florida Education Commissioner, this situation is at the level of a crisis.

For each of the above-mentioned schools, the District has indicated in its Turnaround Plan that it will "ensure that the district leadership team which includes the superintendent, and district leadership, has an integral role in school improvement (Idylwild District Managed Turnaround Plan, August 2019)." Additionally, the Turnaround Plan states that the District will "dedicate a position to lead the turnaround effort at the district level." We ask; who is this person that holds that position of dedicated leadership for the turnaround effort within the District?

We believe that the problems associated with the schools in need of intervention reflect a systemic failure from the central District office to administer and support these school communities. With regard to governance, the Superintendent, Karen Clarke; the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Donna Jones; Elementary Supervisor, Kevin Berry, the Director of K-12 Curriculum, Jenny Wise, and the Director of Research and Assessment, Jeff Charbonnet are each named as central District team members who are responsible for supporting, overseeing, and managing all schools in need of intervention, in collaboration with each school principal. What is the strategy of this team? Moreover, was that strategy conceived with parent, community and stakeholder dialogue? Together we all bear responsibility for our students' education.

We ask for a public conversation in which the district introduces this team to the community and describes the efforts taken to date to comply with the State plan.

We ask for meaningful participation.

Finally, we firmly believe that interventions for the schools that most need our attention; and support for all schools is fundamentally an issue of equity.

-- How, then, do the District's plan related to intervention and the District's plan for equity overlap?

-- Our schools in need of intervention are demographically composed of a majority African American population, many of whom have constrained financial resources. What District policies related to educational access and equitable resource distribution have been established to ensure proportionate student outcomes across race, class, and neighborhood?

We are excited about the opportunity to dialogue presented by the Equity Plan Update Workshop scheduled on Tuesday, November 19 at 4:30 pm in the District Boardroom. We expect that this meeting will elicit deep conversation and collaboration with stakeholders.

In addition, we request that the school board:

-- Review and formally respond to the proposed Educational Equity Steering Committee Bylaws and Structure presented here as Appendix A within one month of receipt of this Open Letter.

-- Convene an open forum within three months of receipt that is co-planned and co-hosted with representatives from this Open Letter to discuss community concerns related to schools in need of intervention. Require all members of the district turnaround team to attend and collaborate.

a) The first agenda item of that open forum should be to redress the structure of governance for the equity plan.

b) Further, we expect a robust dialogue to investigate what interventions are currently underway and what new effective interventions will be incorporated for families to support these three schools and all students with disproportional performance.

Enclosures:

Appendix A: Educational Equity Steering Committee Proposed Bylaws and Structures  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=14kh740\\_uDrovsdBseHA7nrTHO\\_HoSd2G](https://drive.google.com/open?id=14kh740_uDrovsdBseHA7nrTHO_HoSd2G)

Appendix B: TOP-1, District Managed Turnaround Plans, Lake Forest Elementary and Idylwild Elementary  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Bxz74ZKV1CMYbkFnRGFnTFh0Q3RfUjNFR29vS01L5VdqVOVj>

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Bxz74ZKV1CMYQ2JBZnRU02xSX1E1ZWstcDJ5VFVIRGw4Z2w4>

Appendix C: Formal Open Letter Delivered to the Alachua County School Board with highlighted deadlines in format for printing (additional signatures will be added).

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pdMzG0tVZ\\_1nTAcWi6U38AixpIz3fvTj](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pdMzG0tVZ_1nTAcWi6U38AixpIz3fvTj)

Sincerely yours,

Adakelon McCann  
Addie Perry  
Adriane Callicutt  
Adriann Williams  
Aiyanna Carey  
Al'Shenetha Williams-Jamerson  
Alea Wise  
Alex Booker  
Alexis Freeman  
Alexis Jeanna Williams  
Alexis Jennings-Coulibaly  
Alphonso Burnett  
Alphonso Williams III  
Alphonso Williams Jr.  
Alyne Harris  
Amanda Adkins  
Amanda Waddle  
Amanda Welch, Ph.D.  
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Ammorine Cooper, MSW  
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Amy Rollier  
Andrea Berteit  
Andrea Cooper  
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Angel Jones  
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Angela K. Blake  
Angela Moore  
Angela Slater  
Angela Tenerelli  
Angela Terrell  
Angelica Williams  
Anna Prizzia  
Anne Koterba, DVM, PhD  
Annie Muscato  
Anquan Nobles  
Anson Peppers  
Antoine Washington  
Antoinette Dickerson  
April Cameron  
April Wilson  
Ariel Williams  
Arielle Nelson  
Arline Edwards  
Arnetta Rutledge  
Arnetta Stokes  
Ashleigh Henry  
Ashley Davis  
Ashley M Prescott  
Avionce Washington  
Ayana Archer  
Barbara Washington  
Benona Green  
Bernice McCray  
Betty Harris  
Betty Johnson  
Betty Williams  
Beverly Smith  
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Carol Church  
Carol Gordon  
Carol Griffin  
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Cherelle Watts  
Cheri Knecht  
Chris Dubois  
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Christie Carr Freidin  
Christina Cahill  
Christine Engels  
Christine Salama  
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Cynthia Davis  
Cynthia Jordan  
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D'Annette Mullen  
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Gwendolyn Thompson  
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Kimberley Brown  
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Kisha Holcy  
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Kristen Little  
Kristian Guzman  
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Sheryl Baker  
Shevon Cummings  
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Shirley S. Davis  
Shirley Taylor  
Shobi Stephens  
Shronda Allen  
Skye Melrose  
So'Unique McIntosh  
Sparkle Mcknight  
Statiria Scott  
Stephanie Karst  
Stephanie Penny  
Stephanie Seawright  
Stephanie Seguin  
Steven Davis  
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Susan Hegeman  
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