

January 9, 2023

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JAN 11 2023

S.C. SUPREME COURT

Hon. Patricia A. Howard  
Clerk of Court  
The South Carolina Supreme Court  
Post Office Box 11330  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

**RE: *Amy Garrard v. Charleston County School District et al***  
***Appellate Case No. 2020-000605***

Dear Ms. Howard:

I am writing to respond to Mr. Lightsey's letter of December 22, 2022 in which he seeks to inform the Court of erroneous representations that were made by Mr. Lightsey and myself at oral arguments before the Court on December 14, 2022.

I will take the opportunity to correct certain representations made by both parties to the Court on December 14, 2022. Mr. Lightsey is correct that there is no evidence, in the record or otherwise, showing that Superintendent McGinley ever characterized the drawing/caricature that is central to this Appeal as racist. In fact, the record demonstrates quite the opposite, that Superintendent McGinley indicated to the public, including Respondent, that the "watermelon ritual" was likely innocent and not motivated by racial animus. *See App. p. 620.*

Several times during oral arguments I indicated that the *City Paper* was the only publication that called the Petitioners racists. This statement was only partially correct, although not by intention. The record contains evidence of a small number of "publications", as cited by Mr. Lightsey's previous letter, in which members of the public stated that Coach Walpole and the team members were racist. However, the cited "publications" are not created by traditional newsprint or broadcast media sources or professional journalists. These "publications" are for the most part obscure, online blogs that have been posted by individuals, and are not equivalent to the mainstream online or traditional news sources that are widely available to members of the public.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One national news source, the Huffington Post, contained an opinion piece within the publications "Black Voices" section, but even this article does not contain outright and clear assertions that the Petitioners are racist.

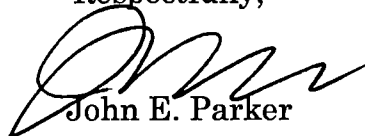
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My intention was to represent to the Court that no other newspapers or broadcast, mainstream news sources such as *The State*, *The Post and Courier*, local television, CNN, etc., or any other news source that would have been widely read by the Academic Magnet community, labeled the Petitioners as racists in the same manner as Chris Haire and the *City Paper*. This representation is true and is amplified by evidence in the record indicating that the *City Paper* and Chris Haire's articles were driving the narrative behind this controversy. See App. p. 105, lines 18-25; p. 101, lines 1-8; p. 133, line 20 – p. 134, line 3; p. 172, line 1 – p. 173, line 8; p. 188, lines 5-10.

I apologize to the extent that my statements could be construed as factually erroneous and appreciate the Court's consideration of this matter.

With kind regards, I am

Respectfully,



John E. Parker

JEP/cc

Cc: Wallace K. Lightsey, Esq. (via email)

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