

15 December 2004

Dear School Board Member:

We are writing to you about the selection of a new principal for East High School.

East High School is in a time of transition with a new principal to be selected in the coming months. Since only one or two parents will serve on the selection committee, we want you to know what other eastside parents are saying to us about East. Parents are greatly concerned about East's future. They are concerned about safety. They are concerned that the quality of an East education is declining. And, they feel that the honor and pride that used to be so prevalent at East have been diminished.

You have the opportunity to erase these concerns with the selection of the right principal for East. We believe that it is crucial that the new principal hired for East bring three important things to our school: (1) leadership that is positive and unifying; (2) a vision for how to achieve success for all East students and the ability to carry out that vision; and (3) the ability to create a safe and supportive school.

(1) Leadership. The principal needs to be a dynamic leader and a positive presence in the school. The principal must have a vision on how to make East successful, and must have the ability and the drive to make that vision a reality. The principal must be able to communicate the vision to staff, students, parents and the East community, so we are all pulling East forward in the same direction. The principal must truly like, enjoy and appreciate East students. The principal must be visible and accessible to students, parents, and the East community. We want someone who will be proud to be East High School's principal.

(2) Success for All East Students. East serves a student population with diverse abilities, interests, goals, and challenges. The principal must have a vision and a plan for how East can help all East students be successful. This means offering a wide range of engaging classes, including continuing TAG classes (which Valencia Douglas promised East parents at the Parent Network Forum on October 5, 2003). This means working to reduce East's achievement gap. This means taking strong measures to reduce East's unacceptably high dropout rate. Providing success for all may be East's greatest challenge, but it is a challenge that the new principal must be prepared to accept and tackle head on.

(3) Safety and Support. East must be a place where students feel safe and welcome. It must be a place where there is mutual respect, appreciation and support between students, staff, and school administration. To help accomplish this, the principal must be prepared to establish and enforce a reasonable and workable behavior plan with clear expectations for all involved parties.

This is a very crucial time for East. We ask you to please be attentive to the hiring of our next principal. You have the final say on this very important issue and we ask that you be vigilant.

We love East High School and are very proud to live in this part of the city. We have given our tireless support for our schools, and we are counting on you to hire the right principal for East this time.

Sincerely,

Kari Douglas & Jeff Fleinblatt
PTA/O Co-Presidents Lake View

Patty Castillo & Kathy McCosky
PTA/O Co-Presidents Gompers

Jody Murphy 
PTA/O Representative Lindbergh

Michelle Brokaw
PTA/O Representative Mendota

Barb Kyle & Cindy Maitland
PTA/O Presidents Blackhawk MS

Kathy Welling
PSCT Chairperson Emerson

Carolyn Clow
PTA/O President Hawthorne

Wendy Sauve'
PSCT Representative Emerson

Karen Morrison
PTA/O Presidents Sandburg

Lawrie Kobza
Sherman PACTS, Sherman MS

Cc: Superintendent Rainwater
Assistant Superintendent Valencia Douglas

Mike Wygocki
PTG President Marquette/Lapham

Stuart Seaborne
PTA/O President Lowell

Mike Park
PTG President O'Keeffe MS

John Larson
President Village of Maple Bluff

Jim Powell
Northside Planning Council

Jill Jokela
Northside Planning Council
Northside PTO/PTA Coalition

Lisa Wiese
Northside Planning Council
Northside PTO/PTA Coalition

Vernon Blackwell
Northside Planning Council
Northside PTO/PTA Coalition

David Cohen
Northside PTO/PTA Coalition

Greg Lofgren
Northside Planning Council