

Statement Regarding Tattnall County BOE's Letter in Response to Demand

The Tattnall County Board of Education has issued its response to Coach Huerta, denying his pleas for fair treatment, reinstatement and renewal while attempting to save-face by sidestepping its original reason for the suspension. This response can only be characterized as an egregious attempt to justify their punitive actions after the fact.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Board of Education for finally providing Coach Huerta with the social media post that constituted the “politically and racially charged banter” used as the *original* reason for punishing Coach Huerta. It shows that no such unprofessional behavior was engaged in by Coach Huerta. However, the Board has now adopted a new basis: that he violated his professionalism standards by “creating the perception that Tattnall County High School supports the theory that teacher inadequacy can result in parental requests for a teacher of their liking.” We do not know of any language in any handbook that reflects this exact reason. We also reiterate that the Tattnall County Board of Education has no official policy on social media posts.

In addition to the makeover that the Board has given the reason behind Coach Huerta's suspension, they now say that a confluence of events between COVID-19, his certifications, and failure to adhere to the dispute resolution procedures in the Tattnall County Board of Education Handbook are the reasons why he was suspended and won't be given a hearing. These reasons lack merit.

To the extent that the Board references Coach Huerta's January 2020 resignation notice, certificates and subsequent withdraw of his resignation notice: these references are not relevant, are used to prejudice his efforts, and are intended to draw into question his dedication to teaching and coaching. Of course, we all know better. Coach Huerta received an extension into the coming year to complete his required certificates. Moreover, the Department of Education issued certain mandates regarding COVID-19 that provided an extra year to all teachers to complete required certifications since schools have been closed. Critically, in early 2020, before he received his written extension and before COVID-19 closed down the schools, Coach Huerta withdrew his notice of resignation.

The Board did not just recently become aware of his certification status, nor has COVID-19 recently emerged. The Board knew this wasn't going to be resolved prior to the coaching period 4 months ago. The newly revealed reasons for the actions taken against Coach Huerta amount to nothing more than smoke and mirrors meant to distract from their actual reason.

Moreover, Coach Huerta has not failed to use any dispute resolution procedures under the Tattnall County BOE Policy. He was never afforded the right or given the opportunity to pursue them prior to his suspension. Regardless, the Policy procedures referenced by the Board are inapplicable based upon the Exclusions section under Policy GAE: Complaints and Grievances.

It is evident from the Board's monumental shift in position that it intends to distance itself from the social unrest that wrongfully suspending Coach Huerta has caused. We, too, would like to move on, and move forward together as a community, with Coach Huerta on the Lady Warrior sidelines. However, the Board should not be able to avail itself to the defenses or justifications found in these alternative excuses for its action. Accordingly, we will proceed through the Courts.

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