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Calvert County Board of Education Executive Staff and School Board Members

1305 Dares Beach Road

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Dear Calvert County BoE Executive Staff and Board Members:

We are writing to document and register our disgust with more of sleazebag, never-should-have-been-Superintendent Daniel D. Curry’s actions, including from the August 8th Board meeting where our family’s right to free speech was violated. Highly respected former Saint Leonard Elementary 2nd grade master teacher Jennifer Hudson was at the meeting with numerous supporters (many of them current and former CCPS educators). As our family has pursued justice and transparency for Sarah and our sons who weren’t safe to remain in the system, we have learned of more and more horror stories where students, educators and families have paid tremendous prices for what can be described as no less than absolute negligence and malevolence. Jen Hudson’s situation is a particularly bad one.

When Sarah and I were in the lobby handing out oversized orange clown bowties and signs to people entering the meeting room, which on one side called for safety in CCPS and on the other “Justice for Jennifer Hudson, (Full Acknowledgement and Compensation),” Ms. Maxey approached us and said that if anyone were to display the side of the signs referencing Mrs. Hudson that it might “invalidate her appeal” for an *incompetence* termination hearing scheduled for September 11th. I informed Mrs. Hudson and several of her supporters, and out of an abundance of caution and without time to check with her attorney, no one held up the signs. The majority of the Board has roundly demonstrated that they cannot be trusted to uphold policy or protect people in CCPS, and this was both an effort to try to get them to do the right thing for Mrs. Hudson and preempt more difficulties for CCPS which might arise. Because John saw Executive Director of Administration Anthony Navarro and Superintendent Daniel D. Curry conferring with Ms. Maxey right before she approached Sarah and me, we believe Ms. Maxey was operating under instruction, which is no different than so many other times she has been used. Daniel D. Curry even tried to blame her in his first email to us on May 1st, 2018, when he said that he conferred with her about delivery of the complaints we sent and for which we did not receive return receipts. It’s amazing how the lying coward is suddenly not accountable any time he is questioned, but any other time is the one in charge, like when he ordered complicit, sycophantic order taker and Board President Dawn Balinski to order Sarah to stop speaking because she used his *name.* Ms. Maxey’s efforts to undermine Mrs. Hudson and her supporters and violate our family’s right to free speech are clear examples of the manipulation and retaliation we have so regularly mentioned and we do not believe Ms. Maxey conceived of nor did these things of her own volition.

Only two days after a student threw a chair that cut her across her legs in early March of 2017, which also happened to be one of many days Mrs. Hudson had been selected to demonstrate effective classroom math instruction to administrators and visiting educators, she was punched in the temple by another student who was long known to create severe disciplinary problems and torment his peers and teachers. All the students in the lunchroom saw the attack, she was given an ice pack and her head was wrapped in gauze in the nurse’s office, but she did not initially receive full medical attention nor the policy-stipulated accident report she requested from Principal Toni Chapman, who told Mrs. Hudson she did not “need” one. A while later her colleagues noticed she had grown disoriented and took over her class while she was helped to the front office to wait for an ambulance. Our youngest son, Andrew, was in the second grade and came home distressed and crying that day. Former Saint Leonard Elementary Principal Toni Chapman was largely dismissive and reproachful. Mrs. Hudson never harbored any malice toward her assailant, and only hoped he could receive help; still, she should not have been forced to be anywhere near him upon her return. The last two and a half years have been a nightmare for her, and while initially she had little reason to suspect CCPS would so completely disregard her needs and policy, she has come to learn that Daniel D. Curry and CCPS cannot be trusted and have actually tried to make things substantially worse for her.

Although CCPS policy states that employees incapacitated by assault should receive “assault pay,” no one ever informed her of that. Although Mrs. Hudson had over a year and a half of sick leave saved because in her twenty-seven-year career there were many years where she had perfect attendance, she was not allowed to use very much of her sick leave, and in April of 2017 was forced back to teach against doctors’ orders, which had her working eighteen to twenty-hour days to try to catch up. Then-Principal Toni Chapman even had her grading papers at home and making lesson plans only three days after the assault, despite work-excusal notes from two different doctors. After Mrs. Hudson (at her husband’s insistence) made a complaint to HR Director Laveeta Hutchins, Ms. Chapman called her and feigned surprise that Mrs. Hudson was doing the work colleagues and her husband were collecting and delivering to her and expressed anger at Mrs. Hudson about Mr. Hudson calling the authorities to make a report on the day of the assault, telling her that *she* never made reports when *she* was assaulted by students, and would protect herself with *oven mitts* when dealing with abusive students. The student who deliberately assaulted her was returned immediately to class and received no consequences, although he was eventually transferred to a classroom next door. At least one long-term sub who filled in had no idea what she was walking into and that the student was still there. After Mrs. Hudson’s April return, the student sneaked into her classroom, pulling out drawers and tearing apart items from her desk. Although no mention was ever made of his punching her in the head, Mrs. Chapman did bring him to Mrs. Hudson to apologize for damage to her desk and expected her to be receptive to his non-apology. Additionally, he continued to disparage her to other students, many of whom were distraught over what had happened to her and feared her assailant. She overheard several of these insults, even though they were never addressed.

Because she was forced back to work against doctors’ orders, Mrs. Hudson’s condition – instead of healing as it would have – steadily deteriorated and she went out again on the FMLA in early November of 2017 of the following school year, for which she had been approved for the entire year. When she was cleared again to work part-time CCPS found this *master teacher* another “job” she could perform, part-time at the Central Office, sometimes under fluorescent lights, from late-February 2018 through mid-June of 2018. Among the “jobs” she was assigned was to carefully cut out thousands of pictures of tiny paper bugs, under specific instructions that she must fill hundreds of paper bags with four bugs apiece in only a certain way, which was no less than a **torture device intended to break her**. *Daniel D. Curry would often check on her work.* After almost four months of trying to completely finish off Mrs. Hudson - and failing - that work ran out, she has had no work since and her neurologist informed her that if she had been allowed to heal from her concussion according to orders she would not have the long-term to permanent brain damage from which she has been suffering for TWO AND A HALF YEARS. In April CCPS completely cut off her pay and on May 29 Daniel D. Curry sent her a *certified* letter of notification for a termination hearing due to incompetence from her on-the-job injuries, even though she should have been donated more sick leave and had already been offered a sick leave buyback from MABE. Unbeknownst to her, her various forms of CCPS-provided insurance were terminated on June 1, 2019. She began inquiring on June 3, and did not receive any confirmation until June 18 from HR Director Laveeta Hutchins, stating that her insurances had been terminated on June 1. COBRA notices, coincidentally, were not mailed until June 18, not to mention the difficulty and inconvenience she experienced trying to obtain consistent, proper medical care even prior to that due to CCPS insurance restrictions. Among the CCPS-approved care she received was from a neurologist whose office is in Montgomery County, seventy-five miles from her home, and who never ordered any brain scans or tests, but would feel her head like a cantaloupe and ask if it made a difference, not unlike online reviews posted by other patients of his. He also ordered her to stop seeing her highly respected local neurologist (and preeminent concussion expert). Fortunately, that order was overturned in a Worker’s Comp hearing and she was eventually able to return to her local, highly competent neurologist, who employs scans as part of Mrs. Hudson’s diagnosis/treatment plan and which clearly show brain damage.

HR took two months to process her February 2018 application for colleagues to donate sick leave to her, and even lied to her colleagues from around the system who tried to donate, informing them she was no longer in need, and then at least one or more of her former colleagues have not been paid for that leave upon their own retirement/s, as policy mandates. Although her neurologist submitted forms confirming her disability and work needs, CCPS made no effort to accommodate another Temporary **Transitional Return to Work**, and denied her FY 18-19 school year FMLA request supported by his documentation. She also never received any response to her June 4, 2019 request for a leave of absence. On the same date she received her COBRA notice in the mail she received a “Calculation of Pay,” which came with no explanation and listed Mrs. Hudson as an *Instructional Assistant.* Mrs. Hudson was a fully-qualified *teacher.* In July, Mrs. Hudson received another *certified* letter from Daniel D. Curry. Down to the date, it was an identical copy of the May 29, 2019 certified letter she had received from him informing her of her incompetence termination hearing. This was not long after the improperly advertised closed-door Superintendent’s evaluation where I (Katy) held up a sign calling for justice for Mrs. Hudson. He loves to twist the knife.

Miraculously, on Tuesday, August 13, only five days after the Board meeting where her supporters were partially hindered in their efforts, her attorney informed her that she had just been granted accidental disability retirement by CCPS and the State of Maryland BoE, and her September 11 termination hearing was cancelled. The timing is coincidental. Is this because the Board and Daniel Curry felt pressure? We hope so, and Mrs. Hudson, for everything she and her family have been through, deserve *far more* than that from CCPS. If the sudden disability approval was the result of pressure, was the Board unaware of what had happened to Mrs. Hudson, even after we spoke about her brain damage and lack of employment at a Board meeting in the Fall of 2018? Did the Board even read, let alone receive, Mrs. Hudson’s June 28 hand-delivered appeal and exhibits? She provided copies for each Board member. Had her accidental disability retirement already been approved and did Daniel D. Curry and maybe the Board hope to withhold that information from Mrs. Hudson and see her terminated for “incompetence” instead, so she would receive nothing? Did Daniel D. Curry or someone else from CCPS employ contact/s at the State level to suddenly approve the disability, after putting Mrs. Hudson and her family through so much fear and worry for so long? What are Daniel D. Curry’s and the Board’s role in making these decisions?

Why, after having worked so hard and given and done so much for so many, for the nearly thirty years required to earn retirement, should Mrs. Hudson be reduced to accidental disability pay, and only be provided insurance which will help her remain the same but not help her improve, not to mention that she lost her life, dental and vision insurance and her young adult children lost their health insurance? Mrs. Hudson is young, and had she been allowed to recover would easily be able to work another ten, twenty or more years. So, because of the chaos and abuse that has been fostered since Jack Smith’s tenure, and which has only significantly worsened under Daniel D. Curry’s “leadership,” Mrs. Hudson’s future earning potential, and the good she would be able to do for so many people, is gone. How is CCPS going to make this right for Mrs. Hudson and her family? She gave everything she had to CCPS, and CCPS has tried to destroy her. At what point should she wage a hard-hitting media campaign? Her situation, like ours, is entirely one-sided, and any decent person who hears what she has been through and continues to face will be no less than completely sympathetic.

Toward that end, we are curious about the white Ford Transit Connect CCPS van/s we have seen stopped in front of our home and Mrs. Hudson has seen in front of hers. While I could not see who was in the van stopped in front of our home, Mrs. Hudson saw a white man in glasses, and we know that Daniel D. Curry has had a habit of checking out CCPS vehicles during the day, even though CCPS provides him a take-home fuel-efficient Toyota Prius and covers all costs, including car washes (from the financial records we actually *did* receive). Mrs. Hudson’s home is on a cul-de-sac at the end of a quiet .25 mi. subdivision/street, .3 miles from the nearest access to Route 4, and our home is 2.5 miles from Route 4, on a small loop in a large and meandering community, with only one way in and out of the community, at one of the further edges from the entrance. Why would CCPS work vans be parked in front of our homes in the middle of the day? We live in purely residential areas, with no schools or stores/businesses close to our homes, about twelve miles from the Central Office. As Daniel D. Curry doesn’t seem to do anything but self-promote and interfere with people’s lives, are we really to believe he needs CCPS work SUVs and vans for actual work? Does he eschew his own vehicle for the sake of anonymity and possibly even to make people feel like they are being watched by Big Brother, instead of some creep in an unmarked car? Where does he travel when he checks out CCPS work vehicles and why might he not wish to be recognized wherever he is going? Part of Mrs. Hudson’s disability diagnosis is for PTSD caused by what Daniel D. Curry and CCPS have put her through. What do you think seeing a CCPS work van parked in front of her home did to her? How is she supposed to feel safe?

On September 18th Mrs. Hudson’s attorney informed her that her September 19th Worker’s Compensation health insurance meeting is being rescheduled. Why? She was informed of the September hearing back in May of 2018, and after an agonizing wait, she is being delayed again, for who knows how long. She has already signed her disability paperwork, but was informed it could take 120 days to finalize. Will the accidental disability go through, or will Daniel D. Curry find a way to thwart it? Will she get the Worker’s Comp health insurance (or better) she so desperately needs? Will she be compensated for future loss of income, which might also help her afford the additional medical treatment that Worker’s Comp insurance will not cover? CCPS relied on Mrs. Hudson for decades to *care*, teach students, train and support other educators and on so many occasions, demonstrate her teaching skills. She did an amazing job. Our kids never had her as a primary teacher, but remember her fondly from the times she did interact with and care for them. We know other people who describe her as one of the hardest working teachers they have ever known. As school years were about to start, other caring and conscientious parents would tell us we should hope one of our kids might be in her class.

On Sunday, September 29th John and I went to the Kirwan Commission presentation at Middleham Episcopal. John and I arrived early and Executive Director of Administration Anthony Navarro was already there. Even though the parking lots were posted with numerous signs telling attendees to park in the back lot, he parked in the front near the doors. Board President Dawn Balinski parked in the back lot near us and Daniel Curry was a late arrival. Inside, we saw them on the other side of the sanctuary from us, sitting at an uncomfortable distance from each other, and we occasionally looked back at them and know they saw us. John and I left after the meeting and did not stay for the Q&A. By the time we exited the sanctuary, Curry, Balinski and Navarro were already long gone, having made a hasty retreat. We couldn’t even see their cars on the road driving away from the church. Board members Claggett and Cousins were there and appeared eager to communicate with their constituents.

Then, on Tuesday, October 1, one of Mrs. Hudson’s doctors and her medical records were subpoenaed by CCPS and their insurer. She was informed by one of his staff who wanted to check on her wellbeing and to gain an understanding of what was happening, but Mrs. Hudson has no idea. Were her other doctors subpoenaed as well? Why? She has always, until her assault, been a very healthy person, and she provided her medical records already. She has nothing to hide. What do CCPS and their insurer think they are going to find? She had perfect attendance for much of her nearly thirty-year career, and was dedicated to being there for her students every day. One of the more devastating aspects of this situation for her has been that she dropped out of her students’ lives without warning and is no longer able to be there for them. She was the closest thing to a caring adult who was able to really be there that some of them even had, and they trusted and relied on her. She has been clear that she wants nothing more than to return to teaching, but she IS NOT ABLE. How hard is that to understand? Just like our sons were not safe to remain in CCPS because Daniel D. Curry could not get to Sarah or her parents, is this, in part, a way of trying to lash out by virtue of our association with each other? Is it a means of trying to drive a wedge between people because Daniel D. Curry thinks he has the right to influence and control people’s lives and interactions, only to protect himself? Does sticking it to a teacher he has already tried to destroy satisfy his punitive and sadistic nature? Maybe not, but timing coincidences abound, and we know Daniel D. Curry enjoys seeing innocent people in pain.

How much more will Mrs. Hudson and her family go through? When, and how, are you going to override Daniel D. Curry and make things right for Mrs. Hudson? Why does CCPS work so hard to protect the abusers in the system while doing everything they can to destroy the best any district should be proud to offer? Most educators in CCPS are female, but nonetheless gender discrimination abounds in any system where abusive and misogynistic men are running the show. Why is there such a pattern of targeting female educators for abuse?

Sincerely,

John Blevins Katharine Blevins

Cc: Dr. Susan Johnson, Director of Secondary School Improvement

 Ms. Kim Roof, Director of Student Services

 Ms. Karen Maxey, Assistant to the Board

 Superintendent Daniel *D.* Curry