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21ST Judicial Circuit

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September 21, 2023

Escambia Board of Education
301 Belleville Avenue
Brewton, AL 36426

RE: Recent Audit

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to express my concerns about the recent audit of the Escambia Board of Education conducted by the Alabama Department of Public Examiners. My specific concerns are the statements which are being made in the community by school board members. They stated that money was misspent or misappropriated and that the matter would be presented to a Grand Jury and that the School Board Superintendent, Michele McClung, could be indicted and arrested. Even if this were the case, that would be protected Grand Jury information and a Class C felony if divulged by a Board Member. I have seen a component of the actual audit and I have been in touch with the auditors who started the audit and the auditors who finalized it and both stated that there was no money missing or misappropriated and that there was nothing that should be presented to a Grand Jury. I do have complete control of the Grand Jury in Escambia County, Alabama and I represent to you that I have no plans to present this audit to a Grand Jury, simply due to a lack of findings by the Examiners. There may be other issues which I am not at liberty discuss, to be presented, but they do not involve your Superintendent.

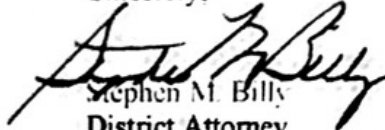
Based on my information, the statements spread in the community have no basis whatsoever and are motivated by a personal agenda or some type of personal gain. Personal agendas have no place when dealing with children. The fact is that Ms. McClung has the best interest of the children at heart and she has accomplished more in her short term than others have in years. The grades are up, buildings have been repaired, classrooms remodeled, safety components are in place, a pre-k school established and numerous other teaching resources have been added to help teach our children. These are things that our community is proud of. The Board should be proud of these accomplishments as well and should strive to keep the positive momentum going rather than spreading lies and rumors. All that does is create a feeling of negativity towards the school system in our community.

I have worked with Ms. McClung on several issues and found her to be extremely professional, ethical and very transparent when dealing with issues. I have not always had that

level of cooperation with previous superintendents. In my professional opinion, a failure to renew her contract would not be in the best interest of the children or the school system. Each Board Member was elected and took an oath to make sound decisions for the betterment of our education system, not to play politics to receive a benefit for themselves or a family member. It is time to carry yourself as a professional and live up to your oath of office and keep this progress in motion.

Please call me if you have any questions and I will be happy to speak with you.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Billy
District Attorney