



MASON CLASSICAL ACADEMY

NAPLES, FLORIDA

FOUNDED 2014

Dear MCA Community,

This letter serves to inform you of my resignation from Mason Classical Academy.

This is by no means an admission of wrongdoing. Some faulty paperwork over a confusing tie-teacher-salary-to-state-tests law is not something anyone should resign over. Neither is being accused of violating privacy law by sharing disciplinary and academic information with a student's very own teachers. Other accusations each have valid, logical explanations as well. The recent activity on the MCA Community Facebook page demonstrates perfectly why there have been some negative interactions between parents and me in the past. Like it or not, if certain, extremely difficult decisions were not made, and certain, very challenging parents were not told 'no' over these past five years, MCA would not be what it is today. The underlying premise behind almost all the negativity surrounding MCA remains: because of educational privacy law, only one side of a story gets told; and social media perpetuates a lack of truth, trust, and civility.

Interestingly, one of the main leaders of those wanting to see new leadership referenced the classic work *Animal Farm*. His post seemed to imply that the MCA leadership is tyrannical. However, as any 8th grade MCA Paladin can tell you, he clearly missed the point of the novel and confused the characters. In the novel, farm animals rose up in rebellion because they were unhappy with the farmer. One of the leaders gathered them all for a meeting in the big barn to discuss their oppression by the farm leadership. Sound familiar? Some of the more vocal animals took charge, began propagandizing others, and eventually became the very thing they despised. "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others," does not describe the leaders of the school; it describes the leaders of the rebellion. As a parent of four current MCA students and founding principal of one of the finest educational establishments in the state of Florida, I pray dearly that the school does not ultimately end up like the book.

Effective August 11, 2019, I will no longer be principal of Mason Classical Academy. "The people have spoken," as they say.

To the students: It has been an absolute pleasure being your principal! The best parts of my school days have been when I was with you in class, in the hallways, and in Marshall Café. We have had some great times together, and I will cherish them always. Keep up the hard work. Listen to your parents. Respect your teachers. Continue learning the true, good, and

beautiful. I am counting on you to keep this country noble and strong while I journey into old age. Don't let me down!

To the teachers: Thanks for all you do! Since I've written that hundreds and hundreds of times on your birthday cards, it may seem cliché; but it's not. That simple statement says quite a bit. You do so much that is both seen and unseen. Nothing changes because I am moving on. The school still remains incredibly strong, and everyone knows that is mainly because of you. The most amazing faculty has been arranged for next year. The new teachers coming in are stellar, professional, smart, good people. They are going to make a wonderful addition to the MCA team! Everyone knows your job is stressful, demanding, and time-consuming; but your job is one of the most important there is. Keep up the good work on behalf of your students, and always maintain mission focused.

To the supportive parents: Thank you for helping to keep me going all this time. Being part of this school and getting to know you have given me hope that all will be well, and that the kids are in good hands. Thank you also for trusting me when I told you that there were always two sides to every story, even while I wasn't able to share mine. That takes serious gumption and trust on your part. Those attributes are what encouraged me to always know that there is a real, true partnership between the school and its parents. Please keep supporting and loving the school and its teachers the way you always have. You are a driving force in what positivity and success have resulted at MCA.

To the disgruntled parents and employees: Whether you realize it or not, every single decision I ever made was with students at the forefront. It's a common adage that the boss isn't supposed to care about being liked; however, saying that doesn't make things easier. It's pained me to have to say no to things I felt would change the school into being like others. I agonized and deliberated over every disciplinary action taken. I did my best to tolerate peoples' anger and resentment, appeasing when I could, as long as it did not sacrifice the mission of the school, core principles, or ethics. Some of you know quite well that what you've done to my family and me over the years was wholly undeserved, but that is the last I'll say about the matter. I forgive you. I also hope that you forgive me for any pain or suffering I may have caused. I pray that you can now move on and find healing.

To the school attorney: Please continue exposing the flawed outcome of the Best and Brightest moneys CCPS said must be returned. Teachers and students ought not be punished for a confusing, ill-advised law that ties teacher effectiveness to state testing. VAM scores come out much later than Best and Brightest moneys, and late paperwork does not change the status of highly effective teachers. Worse, if teachers have a classroom full of struggling students, their effectiveness rating falls; hence, the requirement to return money. A few of our best teachers had their ratings fall because of the VAM score sham, and the MCA board agreed to pay back that smaller \$20K sum in spite of its fundamental teach-to-the-test flaw. But the rest of the teachers remained highly effective regardless of the late-coming VAM scores; there is no reason to return the larger \$140K sum. CCPS knows this to be true, and the right thing for them to do would be to acknowledge it and assist MCA muddle through this, and other, terrible state testing regulations and teacher evaluation methods going forward. Hopefully my resignation will encourage them to reverse their decision on that matter in the best interest of children.

To the board of directors: No one can truly understand your sacrifice. Mason Classical Academy could not be as strong as it is without your steadfast support, unwavering

commitment to the mission, and love. I know your hearts. I know your passion. I know your dedication. I only hope enough others do as well. You know the truth behind the negativity that has transpired, and you know that it is unjust. A much higher power also knows it be unjust. Unfortunately we live in a culture where truth does not matter as much as perception. We live in a time when social media allows and encourages lies and anger to fester, blinding decent people to what is true and rational. I thank you for putting your trust in me to run this amazing school. Hopefully my replacement will love MCA as much as we do.

To new families: The negativity, gossip, rumors, and hysteria found on social media does not represent the heart of the school whatsoever. There is a silent majority of very happy, content people in the MCA community, and I encourage you to seek them out as you begin your child's classical education journey. You should feel excited, comfortable, and welcome as you join the fine teachers, students, and families of Mason Classical Academy. Welcome aboard!

To my family: You have suffered enough. Although I may have been present for you physically, I have not been present for you mentally. You are the best sons, daughters, and wife any man could ever hope for. It's time for us to get back to basics. I'm coming home!

To everyone: I do not take my marching orders from corrupt laws, money, or people with vengeance in their hearts. I take my marching orders from God. This demand for new leadership is a culmination of five years' worth of mob-mentality fueled by social media. As I look to the future, and worry about how much more "change" our culture can take, I find solace in the one thing that will always remain unchanging: God is in control.

Today I take guidance from King Solomon, found in 1 Kings 3:16-28. Rather than explaining why or telling the story myself, I encourage you all to find a Bible, read it, and make your own inferences. The king's wisdom is far greater than mine.

Most sincerely,
David Hull