



EQUITY NOW!

A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

ELECTION EDITION

The Incumbents

Experienced in Failing our Students



Elizabeth Baker



Donna Smith

- ✓ Failed to comply with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Resolution Agreement
- ✓ Failed to put in place programs to address the persistent racial achievement gap
- ✓ Failed to address de facto segregation in the district's K-5 schools
- ✓ Allowed the "Access and Equity" and "Academic Placement" policies to be undermined by the district's Guidance Department
- ✓ Maintained the system of hyper-leveling despite OCR and ACLU data showing how it contributes to denying Black students' access to advanced level and Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- ✓ Defended the 5th grade social studies lesson during which students created posters depicting slave auctions without proper guidance or context for the lesson
- ✓ Failed to address the district's crumbling physical infrastructure
- ✓ Failed to address the continued placement of elementary school students in portable classrooms
- ✓ Supported giving former Superintendent Dr. John Ramos a bonus despite the failings of his leadership
- ✓ Remained silent when informed that students were assaulted by the Maplewood police on July 5, 2016

Is this the "experience" we need to improve our school system?

The Black Parents Workshop Says No!

ON NOVEMBER 7 VOTE FOR A NEW DIRECTION

www.blackparentsworkshop.org

Black Parents Workshop Supports

- A de-leveled academic structure that will promote college and career readiness
- An end to the tracking of Black students into lower-level courses
- A restructured daily schedule that will incorporate support services and programs
- Redistricting the K-5 student population to achieve racially balanced elementary schools
- Greater academic support services in grades K-5, and 6-8
- The hiring and retention of African-American teachers
- An end to punitive disciplinary measures targeting Black students
- A complete overhaul of the district's Guidance and Counseling services
- A focused effort to return outplaced special needs students back into the district to join their fellow students and cut costs
- Greater support for student organizations and athletics
- Real professional development for teachers and staff; including mandatory anti-bias training

Listen to the Voices of our Students

Anonymous Student
Senior, CHS

Throughout my years of being a part of the district, I have found that the achievement gap has done nothing but grown or maintained its size over the years. I feel that a huge contribution to the disparities of the achievement gap has a lot to do with the lack of cultural and social competence of some of the teachers at CHS. Communication breaks down when one's communication style is misunderstood or misinterpreted. There is cross-cultural communication that happens among us, whether it's male to female, adult to child, or one ethnicity to another. The key to understanding one another is our capacity to be both socially and culturally aware of the style of our delivery, who we are delivering our message to, and the sensitivity and respect that we utilize while communicating.

I feel as though successful learning in the classroom has much to do with successful communication and cross-cultural com-

munication between teachers and students. The lack of effective communication in general between teachers and students has caused a great number of minority students to slip through the cracks, further feeding the achievement gap. I suggest that as new teachers are hired, the district should require applicants to have demonstrated successful completion of social and cultural competence training. This will lessen the lack of communication as well as help aid this gap through understanding and effective action in the classroom. Another requirement should be at least two years of teaching experience in a multicultural school district. The teachers, overall as a group should be representative of the cultural diversity of the student body while this is just not the case in CHS.

Listen To The Voices Of Our Students

By Raina Hackett

Senior, CHS

MAC Scholars, Black Student Union

Although progressive and open-minded, the South Orange/Maplewood School District is still not the epitome of equality. We often forget that diversity does not equate to integration. Our demographics may be impressive, but this does not make us a "race haven." There are many factors that come into play, whether it be implicit biases, institutionalized/systemic racism, home life, or prejudices. Although we cannot fix the social flaws of society, Maplewood and South Orange have the potential to be the beacon of change for the nation.

Being a person of color in this school system can have great disadvantages. Many are placed at the bottom from the start of elementary school and struggle for the rest of their academic career to get out. I attended Clinton Elementary School and remember being told that my school was "ghetto" because of its location and demographic makeup. Remember, in this "Stigma Free" town if you live beyond Boyden Avenue you live in "Maple-HOOD." The learning environments in all of the elementary schools are drastically different. If we actually have equity in this community, why should the location of my residence impact the perception of my education?

In 2002, the state of New Jersey passed the Amistad Bill which required infusion of African American History into the ELA and Social Studies departments in schools. I have yet to

see comprehensive African American studies in my 11 years in this school district. I've tried to take a course called "African Studies" in High School, but it was not being offered anymore because it lacked "legitimate curriculum."

Oftentimes, people of all races only rise up when an event occurs in our country or town. I see lawn signs and bumper stickers that read: "We Believe: Healthcare is a Human Right; Black Lives Matter; Women's Rights are Human Rights; No Human is Illegal; Science is Real; Love is Love," yet we fail to act on these words in our daily lives. We fail to recognize that black people are black every day. We fail to recognize that Latino and Hispanic people are Latino and Hispanic every day. We fail to recognize that Asian people are Asian every day. We fail to recognize that gay people are gay every day. We fail to realize that lesbian people are lesbian every day. That white people are white every day. We fail to recognize that with your skin tone or sexual orientation, advantages and disadvantages are evident every day.

In order to achieve change, and the equity we preach, we have to rise up every day.

My skin color does not only matter when it is mainstream. It matters all day. Every day.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

- ✓ The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) found the district engaged in practices that discriminate against African-American students? The federal agency initiated the investigation of the district on its own, based upon data from the district.
- ✓ Two of the nation's foremost civil rights organizations, the ACLU and the UCLA Civil Rights Project, also filed a complaint with OCR against the school district?
- ✓ The school district was cited in another legal complaint as one of the ten worst in the state for discriminating against African-American special needs students?
- ✓ The district's K-5 elementary schools are racially segregated, as are classes in Columbia High School?
- ✓ While the district has few African-American teachers, a member of the Board of Education, Madhu Pai, compared Black male teachers to 'unicorns' because Ms. Pai does not believe they exist?

Elizabeth B. Davis
 Elizabeth B. Davis
 Essex County Clerk

Official General Election
 Tuesday, November 7th, 2017, Essex County, New Jersey
 Election General, starting at 7:00 AM, November 7th, 2017, Cantata de Essex, New Jersey

**Maplewood / South Orange School District
 School Election - Election Escolar**

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| SPRING PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1 NEW JERSEY LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION BOND ACT | SPRING PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT DIVERGENT MONTHLY FOOD/FOOD ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL |
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| <p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</p> <p>I, the undersigned, declare that I have no interest in the outcome or result of this question, and I am not a candidate for any office in the election.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> | <p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</p> <p>I, the undersigned, declare that I have no interest in the outcome or result of this question, and I am not a candidate for any office in the election.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> |

Township of Maplewood

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Where: In the Town of Maplewood, New Jersey, at the Town Hall, Township of Maplewood, Essex County, New Jersey, on the 7th day of November, 2017, at 7:00 AM.



This is a project of the 2017 National Week of Action Against School Pushout as part of our membership in the National Dignity in Schools Campaign. The theme for this year is "Education is a Human Right. We Will Not Give Up the Fight!"