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May 14, 2018

Ms. Elizabeth Baker  
President  
South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education  
525 Academy Street  
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

Via Electronic Mail

Dear Ms. Baker:

It has come to my attention that a current Board member may have been involved in a confrontation with an officer of the South Orange Police Department on April 27, 2018 and may have been verbally abusive toward the officer. I also suspect you are aware of this incident and may have viewed the video of this alleged incident. The Black Parents Workshop will file an OPRA request with the South Orange Police Department for all bodycam, dashcam, and radio audio for April 26-28, 2018.

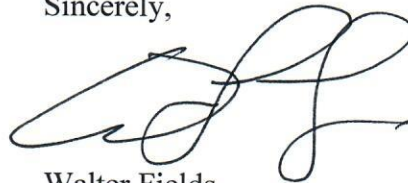
This incident is disturbing given the work we have invested in repairing police-community relations following the July 25, 2016 episode involving the Maplewood Police

Department and the assault on Black youth. We are alarmed by a Board member's alleged behavior given the lack of concern conveyed by the Board when it was made aware of how Black youth were the victims of excessive force by local police on July 25, 2016.

For a Board member to exercise such personal privilege on behalf of self demonstrates a serious ethical breach that should warrant that Board member's resignation. If there was knowledge of this alleged incident by any Board member, or if any Board member was privy to video or audio that confirmed the Board member engaged in abusive behavior toward an officer or disparaged an officer or the South Orange Police Department, and has withheld that information, that member(s) should also tender their resignation.

As you should be well aware by the recent incident involving a Port Authority Commissioner, public servants should not be granted an exception when they attempt to abuse their position. Such behavior by a Board of Education member should not be tolerated; particularly in light of the ongoing issues of policing that we continue to grapple with in Maplewood and South Orange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Fields', with a stylized, cursive flourish extending to the right.

Walter Fields  
Chairman  
(973) 738-7876 - Direct

cc: South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education Members  
Mr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, Executive Director, New Jersey School Boards Association