

Jun 26, 2024

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

With the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful.

May Allah guide our hearts, our eyes, our tongues, and our hands.

The Mohammed Schools of Atlanta Board respectfully but firmly rejects the Majlis As-Shura's attempt to dismantle/dismiss the board, particularly at this critical juncture. With only 5-6 weeks remaining before the start of the new school year, our institution is in the midst of crucial strategic planning and decision-making that directly impacts our students, staff, and community.

We are currently engaged in:

- Finalizing salaries and the school budget
- Implementing tuition planning and scholarship applications
- Executing summer marketing initiatives
- Continuing board development and refining leadership expectations

The abrupt dismissal of the board jeopardizes these vital processes and the stability of our institution.

Furthermore, the Mohammed Schools of Atlanta Board categorically rejects the Majlis' attempt to dismiss our significant track record of achievements. To name a few, by the grace of Allah, we have:

1. Successfully navigated the school through the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19
2. Achieved annual increases in student enrollment
3. Attracted alumni back to the school in record numbers, with over 50% of the Board now consisting of Mohammed Schools, Clara Mohammed Schools, and University of Islam alumni
4. Increased teacher salaries by 40% over the past four years, following a decade-long period of stagnation
5. Attracted 14 and interviewed a record 12 candidates for the principal/director position
6. Reinstated a salary for the school administrative leader after a five-year period of unpaid service

Regarding the specific concerns raised:

1. Lack of response to critical matters: We acknowledge instances of delayed responses and are actively working to improve in this area. However, we note that a fully staffed Board, including a director of administrative affairs (secretary), would significantly ameliorate this issue. We presented a strong candidate for this position months ago, which the Majlis declined without substantial justification.
2. Inconsistent attendance at meetings: All decisions have been made with a proper quorum present. Recent board members have signed agreements outlining attendance expectations.
3. Expired Terms: There are no expired term limits for our current Board members. If the Majlis is referencing recent by-laws to incorporate limits, we request formal acknowledgment of these MSOA by-laws.
4. Instances of Conflict of interest: We strongly refute this claim. No specific instances were cited in the provided letter, and we maintain that no conflicts of interest exist among our Board members. Our community should not seek a Board that merely rubber stamps all decisions made by the Majlis, the Imam, or school leadership. Such conflicts, if they exist, should be discussed in executive sessions, not used as grounds for summarily dismissing an entire board.

We do, however, acknowledge one significant conflict within the school structure: the dual role of the director of advancement for Mohammed Schools and the executive director of the Atlanta Masjid Community Foundation (AMCF). This situation presents potential conflicts in fundraising efforts, which our Board is actively addressing. The Majlis leadership was made aware of this conflict.

The wholesale dismissal of an entire board is contrary to best practices in non-profit governance. It risks losing invaluable institutional knowledge, disrupts continuity, and undermines community confidence. The Majlis' own by-laws recognize this principle through staggered terms.

We respectfully suggest that the Majlis members may not have a complete understanding of the day-to-day operations and long-term strategic needs of our school. This decision, if implemented, could severely weaken our institution at a critical time.

In the spirit of cooperation and shared commitment to our community, we propose the following:

1. A joint meeting between the Majlis and the MSOA Board to discuss concerns and find collaborative solutions
2. The establishment of a regular communication channel between the Majlis and the MSOA Board to prevent future misunderstandings
3. A review and clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Majlis and the MSOA Board in school governance
4. A community-wide meeting to be held within the next 30 days for all stakeholders to be informed and engaged in this important decision-making process

We stand firm in our commitment to our school, our scholars, our teachers, our staff, and our community. As such, we will not be attending the proposed "exit interviews." Instead, our board will convene an emergency meeting to discuss a constructive path forward.

We remain open to support and collaboration that will strengthen our educational institution and serve our community better. Let us work together to build upon our successes and address any shortcomings in a spirit of mutual respect and shared purpose.

"Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah- Lord of all worlds." - Surah Al-An'am-162

May Allah guide us all in our service to this community and its future generations.

Respectfully,

Zenobia Day, MD, MPH
Chair of the Board
Mohammed Schools of Atlanta

On behalf of the Mohammed Schools of Atlanta Board