



Concerned Parents and Citizens of Warnesville/Hampton Homes

208 Doak Street

Greensboro, NC 27406

February 5, 2008

Dear Members of the Guilford County Board of Education:

This letter is a request for help. As you know, a fight occurred on the campus of Grimsley High School on December 14, 2007. Fourteen students were suspended, some for very long periods of time. Some were also criminally charged. Many of these students were our children from the Hampton Homes/ Warnesville Community. We are writing to ask your help in seeking an alternative to the suspension and criminal charges by working with us on another solution.

There are circumstances that we don't believe have been taken into account. Tensions between students and non-students from Hampton Homes, the Dust Bowl, Cumberland Courts, and other areas have been going on for some time. The fight at Grimsley grew out of more than two years of conflict between young people from these areas. Some of us tried to solve the problem so that it would not come to this. We contacted police officials, school officials, and others. Unfortunately, we were not able to get the help needed to stop the conflict that broke into violence on December 14th.

We love our children. We are very concerned about the future of our children and all of the children. We know that fights in school are not acceptable. Fights disrupt the education process, they set a bad example for how to solve problems, and they make the schools unsafe for everyone.

We want to try to solve the problems so that this does not occur again. We do not believe the suspension will solve the problems. The bitterness will still be there just waiting to come up again like it did the last time. We feel that not only will the suspension and charges not solve the problems, we believe that the way this is being handled now could lead to our children getting into even more trouble, including some spending long periods of time in jail.

We know that students make mistakes. We want our children to learn from whatever mistakes they made and to go on to become upstanding citizens. They do have to be held accountable, but we also know that school officials and other officials also made mistakes. Some of this could have been prevented if actions had been taken prior to the incident. The communications between school officials and parents was bad. We are concerned about the collection and use of evidence. Some students feel pressured to make up stuff on others. There are other problems with the process, but this is not the time or place to go into all of the details. Please know that we are not trying to make excuses, and we are certainly not trying to justify fighting, but there are problems with how things have been handled.

We believe we have a plan that can help all parties involved. We are asking your help. We want to organize a mediation process between the parents and the students in the different communities involved so that we can truly work through some of the problems and

misunderstandings. We ask you to please set aside the suspensions and to the degree it is in your power to withdraw the charges. We feel that it is important for you to allow the community a chance to heal itself, and allow the children their right to a sound and basic education.

We had a very good meeting last Saturday (Feb. 2nd). Many parents and students were present. Some clergy, lawyers and other community leaders also attended. We all agreed that we need to work together to get a mediation process started. We intend to contact Mayor Yvonne Johnson and ask her organization *One Step Further* to help us. There may be others willing to help. We would also be happy to receive any suggested mediators from the Board.

We plan to have another community meeting at St. Philip AMEZ Church on 1330 Ashe Street on Thursday, February 14th at 7:00 PM. Any of you are welcome to attend. We don't want our children or anyone's children attacked at the bus stops, in the malls, in their communities, or in the schools. All of this stuff is tied together. We know the school system does not have responsibility for all these areas, but because they are linked together, we feel we must all work together. With the community working together, we are convinced that we can make real progress on these conflicts, but your support is so important to our process.

We know that there are probably some things we have not said or explained adequately but we hope we have said enough for you to seriously consider our plan and to provide us with positive support. Someone from our group will be in touch with the School Board Chairperson in the next several days. Thank all of you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Ms. Margaret Clinard	Ms. Margaret Clinard
Ingram R. Bell	Ingram R. Bell
Rev. Clarence J. Stanford, Jr.	Rev. Clarence J. Stanford, Jr.
Yoghelle Cheek	Rochelle Thornton
Terri Cheek	Terri Cheek
Sasha P. + Ursula Plummer	Sasha P. + Ursula Plummer
Risa Hill	Risa Hill
Robert McCrean	Robert McCrean
Patricia Hopkins	Patricia Hopkins
James Basnight	James Basnight
Wanda Biddle	Wanda Biddle
Erica D. Mayo	Erica D. Mayo
Artetha Jowers	Artetha Jowers