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Dr. Lane Ledbetter
Superintendent
Carroll Independent School District
2400 N. Carroll Avenue
Southlake, Texas 76092

Re: Implementation of Cultural Competence Action Plan ("CCAP")

Dear Ms. Moore and Dr. Ledbetter:

West & Associates, LLP along with The Bledsoe Law Firm have been retained to represent several families in the Carroll Independent School District ("Carroll ISD" or the "District"). This letter is a demand on behalf of those families that Carroll ISD approve and implement the Carroll ISD Cultural Competence Action Plan ("CCAP"). This demand is in response to the disingenuous distract-deny-and-delay tactics that the School Board has recently employed with regard to the CCAP. Indeed, the CCAP process and product were purposely politicized, initially by one of CCAP's own contributors. Further, politically motivated groups have formed specifically to destroy CCAP. The false and divisive claims have been made that CCAP was created for and by liberal activists, and that CCAP will impose overreaching restrictions and sanctions that discriminate against the District's white students. These groups have applied intense pressure on the Board of Trustees (the "Board") to disown and reject CCAP and have gone so far as to initiate litigation to ensure that CCAP is never implemented. It is disappointing to see the Board capitulated to this illogical pressure. A chronology of public events and updates, and contemporaneous facts, are presented throughout the remainder of this letter to corroborate my clients' claim that the Board is acting in bad faith.

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CCAP is a comprehensive plan unlike any other that has ever existed in Carroll ISD's 61-year history. The plan promotes education about multiple cultures thereby enhancing cultural awareness. It establishes a process for documenting, reporting, and tracking culturally based offenses, and disciplinary consequences. It advocates for staff/teacher diversity training as both staff and teachers often were either offenders or they stood idly by when there was a need to protect students from harassment due to lack of training and support. CCAP was a plan developed based on a comprehensive review occurring over 20 months done openly and with full knowledge of the Board. Regular updates were provided to the Board. During the 20 months of planning, there was not one inkling of vocal dissension within the District Diversity Council (DDC) or from the Board regarding the plan. In fact, it was the expectation that this plan would be readily accepted and implemented by the Board. Recent dissent from a minority of people within the community should not deter or delay the Board from full implementation of CCAP.

As you know, in October 2018, a video of Southlake Carroll students using racist language was widely distributed through social media. In response to the backlash that followed, the Board held a special meeting on November 2, 2018. At that meeting, many parents shared their own testimonies of racism and their displeasure with the District's apathetic response. See <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/11022018-552>. Carroll ISD's Administration was appropriately directed by the Board to come up with an initial plan of action. A draft initial plan of action ("Initial Action Plan"), consisting of nine steps, was adopted by the Board. Sheri Mills, the Board President, read the initial action steps into the public record: <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/11022018-552>

On November 5, 2018, the Board held another meeting where Trustee Michelle Moore again read the Initial Action Plan into the public record which was discussed by the Board during open session. <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/11052018-893>

On December 3, 2018, the Initial Action Plan was presented to the Board a third time, with updates concerning training and face-to-face student meetings. There was no vote taken on the Initial Action Plan because there had been no community or staff input at that time. Instead, the Board voted to accept the Initial Action Plan to form a District Diversity Council ("DDC"): <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/12032018-831>

The DDC was formed and charged as follows:

- To promote cultural competence within CARROLL ISD;
- To facilitate communication and understanding among different stakeholders and serve as a community resource;
- To advocate for and support culturally competent and responsive programs and policies;
- To engage students, staff, and faculty to collect feedback on cultural competence in CARROLL ISD; and
- To propose strategies for reaching cultural competence.

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On December 17, 2018, the Administration gave another update to the Board concerning the DDC applications and process. <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/12172018-878>

On January 14, 2019, another update from DDC was provided to the Board concerning the Student Diversity Dialogues:
<https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Agenda/1469?meeting=244314>

With approval from the Board, the DDC Task Force was established to address the five areas of concern identified by the Board. All DDC meetings were open to the public. The DDC is a sixty-three-member committee consisting of parents, students, administrators, teachers, two Carroll ISD Trustees (Trustee Michelle Moore and Trustee Sheri Mills), and City Council Representative Ronell Smith. This diverse group established six subcommittees to work with the attorneys from the District's legal department to develop a cultural survey for the District, and proposed changes to the Student Code of Conduct. Regular updates were provided to the community through media coverage in the Inside Carroll magazine of 2019 which was mailed to every household in Carroll ISD. The theme of that magazine was diversity. [https://issuu.com/miketesoriero/docs/Carroll ISD inside carroll 2019 flip book](https://issuu.com/miketesoriero/docs/Carroll_ISD_inside_carroll_2019_flip_book)

In June 2019, DDC co-chairs presented an update to the Board. <https://carrollisdtx.swagit.com/play/06032019-980>.

Each DDC subcommittee presented their recommendations to be included in the CCAP as set forth below:

- September 2019, the Celebration of Culture, Bias Reduction and Awareness subcommittee presented their recommendations;
- October 2019, the Teacher/Staff recruitment subcommittee made their presentation;
- November 2019 the Professional Development subcommittee made its recommendation; and
- February 2020 the Communications/Outreach, Student-Led Policy, and Curriculum and Instruction subcommittees presented their recommended action items for the CCAP.

In April 2020, recommendations of each of the six subcommittees were incorporated into the CCAP and reviewed by the DDC. The DDC was prepared to present the CCAP to the Board for approval and adoption. At the request of the administration due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the DDC agreed to wait to present the CCAP to the Board until shortly before the upcoming school year.

Prior to the DDC presentation of CCAP to the Board, a group of Carroll ISD graduates began to publish numerous testimonies of racism, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, and anti-Semitic and religiously bigoted experiences gathered from both current and former Carroll ISD students. This group is named the Southlake Anti-Racism Coalition (SARC) and is committed to "pushing for tangible, enduring, anti-racist change in Southlake Carroll ISD." <https://www.instagram.com/southlakearc/>

On or about July 17, 2020, SARC released a 21-page demand letter to the Board making 17 demands. The SARC demands are not identical to the proposals set forth in the CCAP. In

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fact, SARC has complained that the CCAP does not go far enough. This was the first known public complaint regarding the CCAP.

During a DDC meeting via Zoom on July 23, 2020, DDC member and City Council candidate Victor Avila used a meeting scheduled to discuss CCAP to argue that as a former law enforcement officer he disagreed with SARC's demands concerning defunding of the School Resource Officers and further disagreed with all remaining demands by SARC. He followed this outburst with a social media post on his campaign website only a week before the DDC was set to present the CCAP to the Board, confusing his DDC membership with his response to SARC's demands. By doing this, he violated the trust of DDC, politicized 20 months of work of a nonpolitical group therefore ginning up his conservative political base, unnecessarily confused two separate documents (SARC demands and CCAP) cherry-picking one part of one and conflating it to the other, and attempted to use his DDC membership for political gain.

Between July 27-30, 2020, following this politically motivated outburst, a tidal wave of opposition came out of the woodwork. Former Mayor Andy Wambsganss spoke against both SARC and the work of the DDC. Former Mayor John Terrell also spoke against the DDC's work. Then the anti-CCAP social media pile-on ensued. A website was quickly created called SouthlakeFamilies.org which stated that Carroll ISD has been "taken over by liberal activists with a national agenda trying to force Carroll ISD to adopt a radical plan that parents and residents have not had the opportunity to adequately review". To add to this, other non-stakeholders have popped in to bolster the opposition including Dana Loesch of the NRA, the Tea Party, the Tarrant County GOP, and Texas Values, who have labeled it an "LGBTQ plan."

On August 3, 2020, CCAP was presented to the Board. During the Board meeting, there were over two-hours of public comments including approximately 100 speakers. 60% of forum speakers were in favor of the Board adopting CCAP and 30% were against. 10% spoke on other matters. The Board then debated for over an hour on the actual wording of the motion to accept and implement CCAP. Much of the Board's discussion was about the definition of Microaggression and on merit-based hiring. The CCAP was ultimately voted to just be "received" by a 5-2 vote with Eric Lannen and Matt Bryant voting to not even receive the plan.

Since this disappointing decision, the Board rescinded even this small step towards promoting cultural competence by voting to rescind the August 3rd vote to "receive" CCAP. This rescission increased the likelihood for discrimination and bigoted acts toward the students who you have the duty and responsibility to protect and serve. Following this decision, the Board delayed any consideration of CCAP until Dr. Ledbetter was hired and agreed to add noted anti-CCAP members to the DDC. When the interim Superintendent attempted to oversee revisions to the CCAP with the additional members, the Plaintiff in the Southlake Families funded lawsuit obtained a Temporary Restraining Order to prevent any work to revise or implement the CCAP.

The Board has opted to abdicate their constitutional duty and fiduciary responsibility to address the suffering minority students are forced to deal with on a daily basis. As detailed above, the CCAP was developed in accordance with the Board's directives through a public process to address the very real and significant problem of discrimination, harassment and bullying that the students and faculty have to navigate each and every day. The Board's inaction has created an oppressive and hostile environment for students of color and other marginalized groups, has

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forfeited lessons of social engagement for all students, and has failed to maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning. The Board's delay in adopting and implementing the CCAP is inexcusable and represents a breach of the Board's ethical and fiduciary obligations to the families within Carroll ISD, violations of the Texas Education Code and the constitutional right to an education free from bigotry and discrimination. My clients therefore demand adoption and implementation of the CCAP or another mutually acceptable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. We understand that you will be engaging in mediation in the *CISD v. Kristin Garcia* matter. We respectfully request that any settlement of that matter would not in any way undermine the opportunity for the CCAP or other acceptable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan to be adopted and implemented for the protection of Carroll ISD students. To the extent that any such matters may be considered, we request to be part of any mediation team.

This letter is an attempt to resolve this issue in an amicable manner, and to that end we are seeking mediation through the Department of Justice. If we are not able to resolve this issue through mediation and negotiation, we have authority to pursue any and all legal options, including, but not limited to, filing suit against the Board and any other parties responsible for the failure to promptly protect the students of Carroll ISD. If my clients are forced to file suit and/or seek administrative relief, they will seek to recover all damages available to them under the law, including attorneys' fees and court costs.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Very truly yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "RW" followed by a stylized flourish.

Royce West
Veretta Frazier
Gary Bledsoe

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