



The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Chowan County Branch 5572
PO Box 981
Edenton, North Carolina 27932

August 21, 2012

This letter is written on behalf of the Chowan Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ("NAACP") to demand the termination of Dr. Allan T. Smith, Superintendent, and Michele Maddox, Director of Human Resources.

On August 30, 2010, the Pasquotank and Chowan branches of the NAACP requested that the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education place Mary Lyons-Felton on administrative leave with pay until the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and the NAACP completed their investigations of the charges made by Mrs. Lyons-Felton. In a response letter from Richard Browder, Chairman of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education, the board denied this request and elected to up-hold the decision to fire Mrs. Lyons-Felton. Mr. Browder wrote, "The school board [has] acted in good faith and with care and in the best interest of our students."

The NAACP concludes that the Edenton-Chowan School Board did not act in the best interest of its students or Chowan County when it up-held the decision of Dr. Allan T. Smith to fire Mrs. Lyons-Felton. The EEOC completed its investigation and found that Mrs. Lyons-Felton was discriminated against because of her race. The NAACP also found in its investigation that Edenton-Chowan Schools has engaged, and is engaging, in racist employment practices. Dr. Allan T. Smith and Michele Maddox are at the forefront of these discriminatory policies and decisions.

Dr. Allan T. Smith, in his own written statements, praised Mrs. Lyons-Felton's ability to work with young people: "I have been continually impressed with her driving commitment to excellence and her uncompromising quest to deliver quality educational opportunities for all young people." In another letter, Dr. Smith wrote, "[Mrs. Lyons-Felton] is articulate, tactful, and impressive in the manner in which she is able to capture a vision and share it with a group or faculty." However, when Mrs. Lyons-Felton applied for positions of increased responsibility, she was told by Dr. Smith that she was qualified but not a good fit for the demographics of the school system. When she applied for the position of principal at John A. Holmes High School, she was not even given an interview, but she was simultaneously encouraged to seek employment in more "metropolitan" schools, outside of Chowan County, and given a letter by Dr. Smith saying that she was more than qualified to work in the highest levels of school administration.

Data clearly shows that under the direction of Dr. Allan T. Smith and Michele Maddox, Edenton-Chowan Schools have engaged, and are engaging, in a systematic practice of excluding Black people from positions of authority by failing to promote qualified Black people to positions that they deserve. These individuals have generally

avored less qualified Whites over more qualified Black persons in Edenton-Chowan Schools' employment practices.

According to 2008-2009 statistics from The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: 100% of the Principals in Edenton-Chowan Schools were White and 0% were Black; 100% of the Counselors in Edenton-Chowan Schools were White and 0% were Black, and approximately 85% of Teachers and Career Professionals in Edenton-Chowan Schools were White and approximately 15% were Black (184 White teachers and career professionals versus 39 Black teachers and career professionals). However, 93% of School Maintenance Workers in Edenton-Chowan Schools were Black while 7% were white (52 Black maintenance workers versus 4 White maintenance workers), and the student population was approximately 55% white (including Hispanic and Asian) and 45% Black (1,097 Black students out of 2,394 total).

The NAACP does note that since Dr. Allan T. Smith was summoned out-of-state by the federal government to answer for Edenton-Chowan Schools' bigotry, he hired a Black principal. This minimal gesture of tokenism cannot erase the damage of racism and discrimination by Dr. Smith, Michele Maddox and Edenton-Chowan Schools, which continues today. It has been 116 years since the *Plessey v. Ferguson* ruling of separate but equal, 58 years since *Brown v. Board of Education*, and 48 years since the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is well past time to exorcize discrimination, bigotry and racism from Chowan County.

For the reasons stated in this letter and in the lawsuit filed against the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education by Mrs. Lyons-Felton, the NAACP demands the following:

- (1) The Termination of Superintendent Dr. Allan T. Smith;
- (2) The Termination of Director of Human Resources, Michele Maddox; and
- (3) The establishment of a joint committee between the NAACP and school officials to review and monitor the hiring practices of teachers and professionals.

If these demands are not met, the Chowan Branch of the NAACP will apply to the State and National NAACP for additional support and resources. Also, a Title VI Request will be made to Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States, to review Edenton-Chowan Schools' receipt and use of federal funds.

Sincerely yours,

Legal Redress Committee