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May 22, 2024

Via E-mail to: jbarnes1@columbus.k12.oh.us

James Barnes, Esq.
General Counsel
Columbus City Schools
270 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Board of Education Meeting Concerns

Dear James:

In my role as legal counsel for the Columbus Education Association (CEA) I write to you regarding the "Taking Control of the Task Force Narrative" document (hereinafter "the plan"), dated May 10, 2024, as obtained by my client. The plan contains a number of elements which would be in violation of provisions of state law, particularly R.C. §121.22 (more commonly known as Ohio's "Sunshine Law").

It has come to my attention that at the Columbus City School Board of Education meeting on May 21, 2024, despite Board President Vera's public statement that the plan "does not reflect the Board's position," elements of the plan appear to have in fact been put into action. Specifically, I would note that:

- The meeting was scheduled, and publicly advertised, as being held at Hilltonia Middle School, and then changed without public announcement to the Board Offices at 3700 S. High St. The plan obtained by my clients includes both "Next meeting at 3700 – Reclaim our space" (Page 4) and "Change the location last minute" (Page 6).
- The Board agenda was rearranged without prior public announcement. Public comments, which are regularly near the beginning of the agenda, were moved to the end of the agenda after a lengthy executive session more than an hour in length. The plan includes "Rearrange the speaking order" (Page 5).
- Significantly fewer seats were available for the public than normal. The seats that were available were, in large part, filled with Columbus City Schools administrators. More than

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30 parents and teachers were forced into an overflow room. The plan includes "Fill the room with staff and task force members. Do not tell them in advance." (Page 6).

In addition to these items, it has come to my attention that a special Board of Education meeting has been called for this evening at 6:00 p.m. It does not appear that 24-hour public notice of this meeting was given, as required by law.

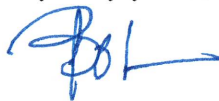
I would ask that you address the foregoing concerns and provide me a written response, no later than Friday, May 24, 2024, which addresses these concerns and provides any legal justification for the rescheduling of the Board of Education meeting on May 21, 2024 and the scheduling of the special Board of Education meeting on May 22, 2024. I would appreciate if you would also address the concerns which we raise about the rearrangement of the Board Agenda and the paucity of seating for parents and teachers at the Board of Education meeting on May 21, 2024.

It is the intent of my clients, the Columbus Education Association, to pursue all available remedies to ensure that the Columbus City Schools Board of Education is in compliance with applicable legal requirements in the conduct of its public meetings.

If you have any questions or concerns, please advise.

With every best wish, I remain,

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Sauter

Cc: John Coneglio, CEA President
Jeremy Baiman, OEA Labor Relations Consultant