

April 25, 2016

**APPROVAL OF DISMISSAL CHARGES AGAINST TROY LARAVIERE
A CONTRACT PRINCIPAL ASSIGNED TO
JAMES G. BLAINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Hereby approves the following charges against Troy LaRaviere, a contract principal assigned to James G. Blaine Elementary School:

DISMISSAL CHARGES

I charge Troy LaRaviere with:

1. A material breach of your principal contract;
2. Violation of Section 6-12 of the Chicago Board of Education's rules and regulations that identify the duties and responsibilities of a principal;
3. Violation of the Directives for Improvement set forth in Warning Resolution No. 15-0826-EX13, issued to you on or about August 26, 2015;
4. Violation of Directives set forth in a Written Reprimand issued to you on or about December 4, 2015;
5. Violation of the Principal and Assistant Principal Employment Guidelines, Categories of Misconduct: (a) Failure to Carry Out Duties; (b) Integrity/Ethics; (c) Law/Policy/Rule Violation; (d) Insubordination; and (e) Conduct Unbecoming;
6. Violation of the Board's REACH Teacher Assessment Guidelines;
7. Violation of the Board's Internal Accounts Manual;
8. Violation of the Board's Acceptable Use Policy, Board Report No. 09-0722-PO3;
9. Violation of Illinois State Board of Education's Directives to Administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers ("PARCC") testing to all Students or lose State funding;

10. Violation of the Illinois State Board of Education's Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, 23 Ill. Adm. Code, Sections 22 and 29;
11. Violation of the Board's Code of Ethics, Board Report No. 11-0525-PO2; and
12. Conduct unbecoming an employee of the Chicago Public Schools.

WARNING RESOLUTION ISSUED TO YOU ON AUGUST 26, 2015

On or about August 26, 2015, you were issued a Warning Resolution, Board Report No. 15-0826-EX13 ("Warning Resolution"), which provided, in relevant part, the following:

1. At all relevant times, you were a contract principal assigned to Blaine.
2. As the principal of a Chicago Public School, you are responsible for ensuring that the rules, policies, and procedures of the Board and its designees are implemented.
3. Your supervisor is the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") of the Board and his designees in which you owe a duty of loyalty and support.
4. In such a position, you do not have the right to perform your job duties and responsibilities as you see fit in public opposition or defiance to the CEO's directives and guidelines.

I. Acting in Public Defiance of CEO's PARCC Testing Directives

5. In March 2015, the former CEO sent an email to all principals, explaining:

ISBE made clear to CPS that failing to administer PARCC ("Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers") with fidelity to all required students puts district funding at risk. Districts and schools are required to test at least 95% of eligible students to ensure that test results for individual schools are representative of the school as a whole and not a small number of students. Failure to meet the 95% threshold puts schools and CPS at risk of financial sanctions.

6. The former CEO directed principals, among other things, to present the PARCC test to every eligible student. The definition of this is as follows:
 - a. For computer-based testing, present the printed test ticket to the student at their testing device.
 - b. Each individual unit of the test must be presented to the student.

- c. If the student refuses to engage in the test, the Test Administrator may remove the test materials from the student's testing space (either booklet or test ticket) and may allow the student to engage in a silent, student-guided instructional activity.

7. In direct public defiance of the former CEO's directives, you did the following:

- a. You wrote an open letter to the Illinois State Board of Education on your public Blog, LaRaviere Blog, <http://troylaraviere.net/>, in March 2015, stating, among other things, the following:

As I wrote in my letter to Ms. Bennett, I will not be following ISBE's ridiculous directives aimed at intimidating children and families into taking tests they do not want to take. Over 80% of our students have already refused the PARCC by submitting letters from their parents opting them out of the test. No child under my watch whose parents have opted him or her out of the PARCC will be sat in front of any computer to take it, nor presented with any materials. The test wastes enough time on its own. We are not wasting even more learning time by engaging in CPS's and ISBE's test-driven political theater.

- b. You publicly supported the Blaine PTA's opt out initiative for the PARCC test.
- c. A Blaine parent asked you the following question, "Since the PARCC might count for something next year, do you think the kids should just take it this year so they can get used to it?" In March 2015, You publicly responded to this Blaine parent's question as follows:

My response is as follows: If the school announced that next year they were going to expose your children to **exhaust fumes** for five minutes per day, would to [sic] be resigned to that inevitability and submit to your child starting his or her exposure *this year* so he or she can "get used to it"? That analogy may seem harsh and over-the-top, but it is my lived experienced that this massive over-testing has been as toxic to education in Chicago as breathing **exhaust fumes** would be to a living organism (emphasis added).

- d. Due, in part, to your open opposition to PARCC testing, more than 50% of Blaine students did not take the test. Blaine had the highest number of elementary students not taking the PARCC test than any other elementary Chicago Public School.

- e. In direct defiance of PARCC testing protocol and the former CEO's directive, you allowed Blaine staff to do the following during PARCC testing:
 - i. They did not present the printed PARCC test ticket to each student at their testing device.
 - ii. They did not present each individual unit of the PARCC test to Blaine students.

II. Insubordination Directed Toward the Former Interim CEO During a July 13, 2015 Budget Meeting

- 8. On or about July 13, 2015, during a CPS budgetary meeting with several hundred people present, you asked a provocative question from the audience attempting to highlight financial missteps of the Board and demanding an answer to those missteps.
- 9. The former interim CEO responded that he would answer your question outside of the public forum and requested that you join him.
- 10. Instead, you chose to defy the former interim CEO by demanding that your question be answered by the former interim CEO in the public meeting. When the former interim CEO stated, "You are disrupting this meeting," you retorted, "And you are insulting the intelligence of everyone in this meeting."
- 11. Shortly thereafter, you joined the former interim CEO in the hallway with others still present. You then entered into a public bantering with the former interim CEO in which you stated, among other things, the following:
 - a. In response to the former interim CEO's question as to why you worked for CPS if you were so unhappy, you snapped, "To save it from people like you [the former interim CEO]."
 - b. In response to the former interim CEO's question as to why you would want to stay at a meeting that you thought was "nonsense," you countered, "That's because you're too busy dishing it [nonsense] out."
- 12. Your conduct was unbecoming a principal of the Chicago Public Schools.

As part of the Warning Resolution, you were also issued the following:

Directives for Improvement

- 1. Follow all directives, guidelines and rules issued by the Board, its designees, and the CEO and his designees.
- 2. Do not publicly take a stance that is in defiance of any directive, guideline, or rule issued by the Board, its designees, or the CEO or his designees.

3. Do not be insubordinate toward your supervisor which includes the CEO and his designees.
4. Always treat the CEO, his designees, Blaine staff, students, and the community with respect and dignity.
5. If you disagree with any directive, guideline or rule issued by the Board or the CEO, or their designees, raise your concerns in a private respectful manner.
6. Conduct yourself as a role model to students.

**Dismissal will be requested if you fail to comply
with the directives for improvement as noted above.**

WRITTEN REPRIMAND ISSUED TO YOU ON DECEMBER 4, 2015

Pursuant to an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General, you were issued a written reprimand, on or about December 4, 2015, for violating the Board's Code of Ethics (Political Activities) by using your official Board position to engage in Political Activity or endorse a Candidate for Elective Office ("Written Reprimand"). You were warned that a violation of the directives set forth in the Written Reprimand could result in your dismissal from the Board.

SPECIFICATIONS

1. During all relevant time periods of these specifications, you were the contract principal of James G. Blaine Elementary School ("Blaine").
2. Despite receiving the above-referenced discipline and warnings, you engaged in the following misconduct:

I. Dereliction of Duties

3. You have not devoted sufficient attention to your job duties and responsibilities as the principal of Blaine.
4. For example, you have largely failed to observe and evaluate your teaching staff at Blaine for the 2015-2016 school year. As of April 13, 2016, you had completed only 17% of your required evaluations, which is well below the District and Network averages. Your failure to adequately observe and evaluate your teaching staff occurred despite receiving multiple notifications to do so for the past few months.
5. You have failed to respond to a Blaine School Financial Audit, dated March 23, 2016, that rated Blaine as "Needs Improvement" ("Financial Audit"). You have failed to file a response to the Financial Audit that identified serious financial issues at Blaine such as: (a) Lack of Adherence to Cash Receipt Policies and Procedures; (b) Lack of Adherence to Purchasing Policies and Procedures; and (c) Insufficient Documentation of Staff Payroll Activities.
6. You have spent an excessive and inappropriate amount of time performing personal activities or non-Board activities during work time.
7. You have used the CPS Network and computer resources excessively and inappropriately for personal use during work time.
8. You have continued to publicly oppose PARCC testing of CPS students in direct defiance of the CEO's directives and ISBE mandates.

II. Improper Use of Official Board Position: (i) to Work on Political Activity During Board Compensated Time, and (ii) to Engage in Political Activity or Endorse a Candidate for Elective Office

9. From January 2016 through the present, in direct defiance of the above-referenced warnings issued to you, you have engaged in the following misconduct:
- a. You engaged in Political Activity on Board compensated time. For example, but not limited to the following, you used social media, your CPS calendar and your CPS email account to engage in Political Activity on multiple occasions during Board compensated time; and
 - b. You used your official Board position to engage in Political Activity or endorse a Candidate for Elective Office.

III. Insubordination

10. As the principal of a Chicago Public School, you hold a high-ranking managerial and supervisory position in which your public statements and actions are necessarily viewed as statements that reflect on the Board and/or the CEO and their designees.
11. As the principal of a Chicago Public School, you owe a duty of loyalty to the Board, the CEO and their designees.
12. Despite being warned and disciplined in the past, you engaged in the following misconduct in opposition to, defiance of, or critical of the following policies or positions of the Board, the CEO or their designees:
- a. You engaged in public actions that supported the rejection of the January 29, 2016 Tentative Agreement between the CTU and CPS leadership;
 - b. You engaged in public actions that supported the April 1, 2016 illegal strike sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union;

- c. You engaged in public actions that supported teachers and staff members who participated in the April 1, 2016 illegal strike sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union;
- d. You passed out letters to Blaine parents that were critical of Board policies and positions; and
- e. Your consistent efforts to undermine Board policies and State Board of Education directives have been reckless, critical and insubordinate toward the Board, the CEO and their agents in your actions and deeds from September 2015 to the present.

You have engaged in conduct constituting a material breach of your principal contract and violating the Chicago Board of Education's rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Board's Ethics Policy, the Illinois State Board of Education's Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators and Illinois State Board of Education Directives to administer PARCC testing.

You are subject to dismissal due to your irreparable misconduct, and/or your material breach of your principal contract, and/or in violation of the Directives for Improvement set forth in a Warning Resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

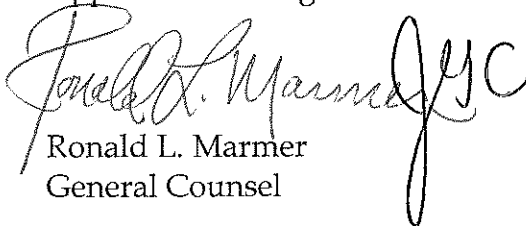


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