



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

WWW.DPI.NC.GOV

August 20, 2020

via email

Dear Mr. Ford,

Earlier this week, in summarizing your disappointment with the Democratic Party, you indicated that you believe “swing voters” and “white moderates” equate to “white supremacy.” While “swing voters” might not share your political views, they do share our desires for positive changes for our communities and schools. Many of these centrists have other titles, too, like educators or parents. In appointing you to the North Carolina Board of Education, Governor Roy Cooper has tasked you to represent all North Carolinians without bias.

Given your leadership role on the State Board, while you might not find the current Democratic Party leadership to be very inspiring, it is unacceptable to equate middle-of-the-road North Carolinians to being racists. Chairman Eric Davis appointed you to lead the State Board’s Strategic Planning Committee, the very committee charged with drafting a framework of action to improve opportunities and equity for all students and educators.

How can you continue to serve in this role when you have equated a large group of sensible constituents to racists? Your actions have called into question your ability to continue to lead this committee and to serve on the State Board of Education.

But America is a land of second chances. If you can provide adequate assurances that your radical views will not impair your ability to serve in an unbiased manner, I’ll defer to Governor Cooper, who appointed you to the State Board, and Chairman Davis, who placed you in your leadership role. If you cannot, you should at the very least resign from the Strategic Planning Committee. DPI and the State Board face many challenges moving forward, and your inflammatory rhetoric harms our mission to provide a sound, basic education to all students.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Johnson".

Mark Johnson
NC Superintendent of Public Instruction

cc:

Governor Roy Cooper
State Board of Education and Advisors
NC Department of Public Instruction