

FILE

P. 4

P. 6 of 7  
AA-1  
P-347

IN THE MATTER OF

BEFORE THE

Diana Williams  
1311 N. Ellwood Ave.  
Baltimore, Maryland 21213

NEW BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF  
SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

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STATEMENT OF CHARGES

Robert Booker, Chief Executive Officer, does hereby recommend to your Honorable Board, pursuant to the Maryland Code, Education Article (1997 Replacement Volume) Section 6-202(a), the dismissal of Diana Williams, teacher, Southeast Middle School, #255, for misconduct in office, and for the following reasons:

1. On or about February 24, 1999, a letter was circulated to parents of students of Southeast Middle School, #255, which erroneously stated that the school's drinking water was lead contaminated. The letter stated that the drinking water had been tested for lead and found to have levels "higher than acceptable by the Environmental Protection Agency." The letter urged parents to have their children tested as soon as possible. Extrinsic circumstances established that Ms. Diana Williams authored the letter.

2. The following day, several parents and the media contacted the school and the Office of Public Relations to express their concerns about the existence of lead in the drinking water at School #255 and health risks posed to students and staff. The letter also raised sufficient concern among staff members to warrant an emergency staff meeting. In that meeting, Dr. Jane Fields, principal, advised school staff that the drinking water was safe and not lead contaminated. Dr. Fields also shared with staff a letter to parents, which clarified the inaccurate information contained in Ms. Williams' letter.

3. On Friday, February 26, 1999, Dr. Fields requested that Ms. Williams attend a conference to discuss the letter and to provide Ms. Williams an opportunity to explain her role with regard to the letter. At the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Fields advised Ms. Williams of her intent to recommend to Dr. Robert Booker that Ms. Williams receive an emergency suspension without pay.

4. On March 1, 1999, Dr. Booker advised Ms. Williams that he had accepted Dr. Fields' recommendation and that she would be placed on an emergency suspension without pay pending further disciplinary action.

5. Since her employment with the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), Ms. Williams has engaged in similar conduct that has caused some level of disruption in the BCPSS. On December 3, 1996, Ms. Williams wrote a letter to Mayor Kurt Schmoke claiming that staff and students at her former school, Fairmont-Hartford High School, #456, had been exposed to

Exhibit 1

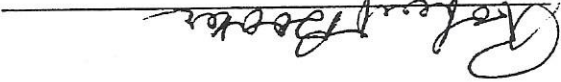
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lead due to a renovation project at the school. Copies of this letter were given to staff, students and parents of #456. In the letter, Ms. Williams, referring to herself as a lead abatement expert, discounted the results of the November 1996 study by John Hopkins University, which specifically found that the renovation project had not exposed the staff and students at #456 to unsafe amounts of lead.

6. On another occasion, Ms. Williams wrote and distributed a letter that claimed that an expert had cited three (3) BCPSS schools as lead-based paint and asbestos hazards. This letter also identified Ms. Williams as a lead expert. Copies of the letter were given to staff, students, and parents. One of the schools cited in the letter was James Mosher Elementary School, #144. The letter caused a panic among parents of students at #144 such that Ms. Cascelia Spears, principal, contacted the Department of Facilities to confirm the accuracy of Ms. Williams' letter. The Facilities Department advised Ms. Spears that they were not aware of any citations that had been issued against her school for lead paint and asbestos. Moreover, the Facilities Department confirmed that all BCPSS schools had been inspected for such hazards in accordance with the law.

7. On April 26, 1999, Dr. Patricia Abernethy, Southeast Area Executive Officer, formally recommended the dismissal of Diana Williams for misconduct in office.

Wherefore, it is recommended that Diana Williams be dismissed as a teacher from the Baltimore City Public School System for misconduct in office.



Robert Booker

Chief Executive Officer

cc: Alan Harris, Administrative Support Officer  
Dr. Patricia Abernethy, Area Executive Officer  
O. Albrie Love, Jr., Director of Personnel  
Michael Mayer, Director of Labor Relations  
Dr. Jane Fields, Principal, School #255  
Bartel Harrison  
Monzella Saunders-Owings  
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CX270

P. 5

P. 1 of 1

AA-2

P-348

P. 4 of 9