

Petition: Justice for Principal Abdul Muhammad

Background

Even before Abdul Muhammad was named Principal of Lindblom High School, the various interests that ultimately orchestrated his removal were coming together to prevent the Local School Council from naming him Principal. Kishasa Williams-Ford of the Office of Local School Council Relations, Devon LaRosa, Chief of Network 16, and a small group of white Lindblom teachers harassed members of the Local School Council's Principal Selection Committee to pressure them not to choose Muhammad. When that ultimately failed, they engaged in a series of appalling acts to create as many "Public Failures" as possible for Muhammad. CPS officials trampled over the rights of the Lindblom Local School Council and looked past documented instances of theft of school money by a Lindblom teacher in order to get that teacher and her allies to gather and manufacture misinformation on Muhammad. Then the CPS Law Department aided and abetted this plot by launching fishing expeditions and one-sided investigative practices indisputably aimed at prejudicing and convicting Mr. Muhammad without any credible evidence. Muhammad was targeted and victimized by internal corruption, religious bigotry, and deep conflicts of interest. Mr. Muhammad's case is exemplary of a larger troubling phenomenon of how principal rights are violated in CPS, and in our city in general. Last year, a group of black male principals came together to ask for meetings with CPS to address inequitable district policies and practices. Three of these Black male principals have been removed this year. One of them was Mr. Muhammad.

Our Demands

Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Chicago Board of Education

- 1. Restore Principal Muhammad immediately as principal of LMSA with a four-year contract.**
- 2. Restore Gerald Morrow and Kimberly Gibson and revisit the cases of all six principals who were removed as a result of investigations conducted by Kelly Tarrant and the CPS Law Department until a full independent investigation of the Law Department and its tactics is completed.**
- 3. Terminate CEO Pedro Martinez for either directing or allowing three offices under his supervision to conduct a witch hunt of Abdul Muhammad and other African American principals.**
- 4. Direct the new CEO to issue a Public Apology to Mr. Muhammad, the Lindblom community and to each principal and school community affected by witch hunts conducted by the CPS Law Department.**
- 5. Terminate every Lindblom staff member who gave false testimony to the Law Department against Principal Muhammad.**
- 6. Terminate Kelly Tarrant and Libby Massey for using incompetent and unethical one-sided investigative tactics that do not meet the standard for fair investigations or well-reasoned findings.**

- 7. Terminate Devon LaRosa for his role in orchestrating the witch-hunt against Abdul Muhammad and for incompetent supervision.**
- 8. Terminate Felicia Sanders and Bogdana Chkoumbova for incompetent supervision and for either directing or allowing officials under their supervision to conduct a witch hunt of Abdul Muhammad and other African American principals**
- 9. Terminate Kishasha Williams-Ford and investigate the Office of LSC Relations' handling of the Lindblom principal selection process, ballot tampering, and their alleged efforts to keep the LSC confined to ALSC status.**
- 10. Reconstitute the Law Department, Office of Network Supports, the Office of the Inspector General, and Office of Local School Council Relations. Make whole any principal or assistant principals who were targeted by these offices.**
- 11. Convert the Lindblom ALSC to full LSC status immediately.**

The United States Justice Department's Office of Civil Rights
The Illinois State Board of Education

- 1. Investigate Kelly Tarrant, Devon LaRosa, The Office of Network Supports, the Law Department, the Office of Local School Council Relations, and the Inspector General for Civil Rights Violations and Violation of Due Process**
- 2. Establish a commission to review all questionable removals of Chicago principals since 2010.**

The Illinois General Assembly and Governor J.B. Pritzker

- 1. Conduct hearings into the civil rights and due process violation committed by Kelly Tarrant, Devon LaRosa, The Office of Network Supports, the Law Department, the Office of Local School Council Relations, and the Inspector General.**
- 2. Propose and pass legislation to prevent such abuses from reoccurring.**