



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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January 6, 2017

Commissioner MaryEllen Elia
New York State Department of Education
New York State Education Building
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner Elia:

We are the elected parent leaders of Community District 3 in New York City, and we are writing to you in solidarity with the Buffalo School Board in its efforts to remove Carl Paladino from their council. As you are no doubt aware, Mr. Paladino recently set off a national uproar with his obscene, sexist, and racist remarks about President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. While this is hardly the first time that Mr. Paladino's public remarks have sparked controversy, the latest example is a stunning display of vulgarity and bigotry and it has placed the Buffalo School Board into the national spotlight.

In response to Mr. Paladino's remarks and his refusal to apologize for them, the board passed a resolution calling upon Mr. Paladino to resign his seat immediately. The resolution made it clear that Mr. Paladino was a board member in a school district serving a population that is 70% minority, and that Mr. Paladino took his seat by swearing an oath to provide an education for the children of Buffalo that respects diversity and is free of fear. Further, the resolution cited the New York Constitution and the Dignity for All Students Act that give all children in New York the right to an education which is free from discrimination and harassment, and it noted that Mr. Paladino's conduct "irrevocably impacted" the Board's work.

Mr. Paladino refused to resign as demanded, and now the Board of Education plans to file a 306 Petition with your office seeking assistance in removing Mr. Paladino from the Board. We would like to express our support for this action and request that you assist the Buffalo Board of Education in any manner within your legal authority. Mr. Paladino has a Constitutional right to express himself, but his responsibilities and obligations as a member of the Buffalo School Board are incompatible with the overt racism and sexism that he has expressed in the most vulgar manner imaginable. The families of Buffalo are entitled, under the New York Constitution and under statute, to an education that is free of discrimination, but one of the members of the body responsible for that education has expressed extreme racial animosity. Those families are correct to doubt his ability to make decisions on their behalf, and the Buffalo School Board is right to want to sever their relationship with him. Please assist the Buffalo School Board with all due speed and diligence.

Sincerely,

Community Education Council 3