

**OPEN LETTER TO THE TOWN OF SHARON'S
RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES DEMANDING THE
IMMEDIATE REINSTATEMENT
OF SUPERINTENDENT DR. VICTORIA GREER**

As the nation is grappling with multiple crises, including systematic racism and a pandemic, the Town of Sharon is also facing its own versions of both.

To a large extent Sharon's actions to stem the spread of the virus have been laudable. Unfortunately, recent attempts to redress systemic racism within the administration of the Sharon Public School Department have been deplorable.

Indeed, we stand by the shared values embraced by our Board of Selectmen and Selectwomen that the vestiges of the badges of slavery have no place in our Town.

We believe the dismissal of Dr. Victoria Greer as Superintendent of the Sharon Public Schools was unfair, discriminatory, and needs to be immediately addressed.

In July 2017, Dr. Victoria Greer began her tenure as the Superintendent chosen for her qualifications, her focus on equity, her student-first approach, and her passion and commitment to education.

Before her arrival, Dr. Greer served as Assistant Superintendent of Special Education in Cambridge from 2013 to 2017. She served a district of 6900 students, 20% (1380) of whom received special education services. Dr. Greer oversaw a budget of \$59 million, about 10% larger than Sharon's entire school budget.

The Chair of the city's School Committee praised Dr. Greer as, "one of the best hires Cambridge has ever had".

As leader of Sharon's schools, Dr. Greer received multiple appointments and commendations including:

- An appointment as Chair of the state's Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council in January 2020 by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education.
- The Black Excellence on the Hill Award in February 2019 from the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus.
- Recognition by state Representative Louis Kafka for an "exemplary job of leading the school system with a fresh perspective for education that will have a positive impact on the Sharon community for years to come."

Dr. Greer executed significant and impactful measures including:

- **Becoming** the leading advocate of providing the highest quality education that taxpayer money can provide for every student in the Sharon Public Schools.
- **Improving** the high school ranking from #10 to #6 in ranking of state high schools by Boston Magazine, August 29th 2019.
- **Directing** the Massachusetts School Building Authority building project for Sharon High School resulting in the approval of the \$163 million dollars to the new state-of-art Sharon High School that saw a construction groundbreaking this summer.

- **Securing** grant money to offset costs of the new high school by obtaining a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority to reimburse the Town approximately 42% of the cost of the building.
- **Reorganizing** and streamlining the administration office to focus on teachers and students.
- **Developing** and **improving** relationships with stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, administrators, town officials, and other boards resulting in increased transparency, involvement, and engagement.
- **Leading** a visioning process including her listening tours, which welcomed the varied perspectives of town residents.
- **Collaborating** with no less than 45+ administrators, teachers, students, and parents towards the development and implementation of the district strategic plan.
- **Implementing** a zero-based budgeting process to improve the overall annual budgeting process.
- **Instituting** an annual “State of the School” address to update the community on and discuss forthcoming strategic plans.
- **Directing** and **overseeing** a comprehensive review of the special education program.

- **Increasing** the total number of nursing staff within the school system.
- **Driving** the district to secure an [Equity Diagnostic and Analysis](#) by a third party consultant outlining long-term gaps in equity in the Sharon School systems for Black and Brown students.
- **Championing** a focus on cultural competency and inclusion within the administration.
- **Increasing** the total number of central office staff of color in the district with the hiring of Mrs. Mintor, Melanie Rosado (HR), Dr. Burke, and Cristino Hernandez (Dr. Greer's Admin).
- **Prioritizing and supporting** high school students in their efforts to be heard on key concerns.

UNEQUAL TREATMENT

In September 2020, the School Committee announced that Dr. Greer's contract would not be renewed when it expired in June 2021 and that she would be placed on administrative leave for the duration. The School Committee provided no justification, or much less any explanation for its actions.

For the three years of her shortened tenure, Dr. Greer consistently received "proficient" ratings from the School Committee.

The standard practice for the five preceding white superintendents who received a similar “proficient” rating was for the School Committee to renew their contracts for one year or more.

Dr. Greer was not afforded the same treatment.

If this action is sustained, Dr. Greer will not only be the first African American Superintendent of the Sharon Public Schools, but the first Superintendent to be terminated after earning a “proficient” rating in all four of the performance areas without any justification.

On May 15, 2020, as Committee members were preparing their evaluations, Dr. Greer met with the School Committee Chairman and lawyer. Dr. Greer told them about the hostility and racial harassment she had been subjected to by two members of the School Committee - before, during, and after Committee meetings.

“This has to stop,” she said. “And it must stop, now!”

In July, 2020, barely five weeks after Dr. Greer’s complaints to the Chair and Town Counsel, the School Committee Chair convened an executive session and **without any factual justifications** they voted to not renew Dr. Greer’s contract and place her on administrative leave.

Since a second change this year in the leadership of the School Committee, the management of its meetings - which are all virtual due to the pandemic - has been unfortunate. Black and white taxpayers contributing their perspectives have frequently been muted by the Chair. Members of the

Black community have often been gaveled as being out of order.

Both prior to and since that change, the members of the school committee and the current chair had publicly shown disdain for Dr. Greer. This attitude of disrespect was also projected toward Fern Fergus, the only Black member of the Committee (Mrs. Fergus has since resigned due to health reasons).

The Sharon residents of multiple ethnicities and racial backgrounds have banded together to demand an immediate end to the persistent hostile treatment by the School Committee.

We agree with Dr. Greer's admonition that it "has to stop! And must stop now!"

We further stand in agreement and support that there is no person, or School Superintendent more prepared and capable of addressing the crisis of the Town's two pandemics of coronavirus and racism, than Dr. Greer.

RESOLUTION DEMANDS

1. Rescissions of both the one year administrative leave of absence and termination of Dr. Greer's employment in June 2021;
2. Reinstallation of Dr. Greer as Superintendent of the Sharon Public Schools.
3. Awarding Dr. Greer a 1 to 5 year contract renewal in the same manner as her predecessor superintendents.

4. Continue to apply and enforce Dr. Greer's proposed goals to actively enroll African American students in Advanced Placement classes and to hire more support staff of color.
5. A letter of public apology to Dr. Greer, the students, parents, and other citizens of the Town of Sharon for the disregard of our input and feelings and for making a unilateral decision without community involvement or transparency.
6. The departure from the School Committee of those who voted to oust Dr. Greer, either through resignation or defeat at the ballot box.
7. A letter of commendation from the School Committee that specifically recognizes Dr. Greer's accomplishments and contributions as Superintendent to be added to her personnel file.
8. Retain a certified alternative dispute resolution mediator and/or arbitrator to resolve the discrimination claims Dr. Greer has filed with Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.
9. Require School Committee members, to successfully complete a full anti-racism curriculum recommended and designed by the Town of Sharon's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (SDEIC). This should be inclusive of the following areas: zero tolerance mandates, anti-racism practices policies and procedure, and micro as well as macro aggression programs.

To our allies in the Town of Sharon, we implore you to apply pressure to the Sharon School Committee by way of letters, your presence at School Committee meetings, showing up at protests, and being overtly vocal that the unilateral actions taken by the School Committee against Dr. Greer do not represent your will - do not represent you! We implore you to take a stand and take action towards the ideals we all espouse for our town.

In the immortal words of the late, great John Lewis - "Get out there and push, and stand, and speak out, and get in the way the same way that my generation got in the way. Get in trouble. Good Trouble. Necessary Trouble."

This is for our children; this is for our community. Get in Trouble. This is Good Trouble!

Signed

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