

November 1, 2007

To: Mr. Sammy Smith
Candidate for the School Board

From: Dr. Steven E. Ballowe, Superintendent
Gainesville City School System

Re: Campaign: "Smith4Students"

Dear Mr. Smith,

As several individuals have called expressing concern that your campaign is an attack on my leadership and the "Gainesville Model, I would like to offer a few insights for your reflection!"

When you review the past history of the Gainesville School District, the Gainesville School Board had to determine in 2001 if there was a need for a "new culture" to benefit the changing school community demographics. The determination that change was needed led to my hiring and relocation to Gainesville, Georgia.

As with any superintendent you will get what you pay for! Most districts continue with "business as always", make excuses for any achievement weakness and perhaps save a few dollars with a single position, such as the superintendent. Rarely do these districts consider the price paid by the children! Have you reviewed the loss of quality of life for generations of children that were not served adequately in Gainesville and others still suffering across Georgia and the United States? Sadly, most of this lack of quality and loss is relegated to minority children and the poor. Gainesville was no exception, as past achievement scores for minority children and the poor, as well as the drop out rate indicated!

From my viewpoint the questions for voters should address, what price are our children's future worth? What price is the leadership and the vision to serve all children worth? What is the value of mediocre leadership? What mediocre achievement results will be tolerated, and for which children?

The Gainesville Board made the decision to change direction and have supported the creation of the "Gainesville Model"! While it is gratifying to get the applause of President Bush, Governor Perdue, Lieutenant Governor Cagle, State Superintendent Cox and thousands of other educators, board members and politicians, that is not the value derived from the "Gainesville Model"! Nor is the satisfaction from the "historic charter school legislation" passed in 2007 to provide the "choices that exist in Gainesville to all Georgia families"!

The true value from the leadership to create the "Gainesville Model" rests with the achievement of our children:

- Every elementary academy is "distinguished"
- Middle school acceleration provides more opportunities than every public and private school in Georgia; with great success on end of course tests
- Gainesville High School has created opportunities that have allowed our graduation rate to "soar" beyond the national and state averages!

All of this success for our children has occurred while the demographics have changed; presenting a challenge that few school districts have been able to overcome. Gainesville is the rare exception!

The true values from the "institution" created by the "Gainesville Model" and the leadership of Steven E. Ballowe are:

- every parent/family is valued and provided choice
- every educator is respected and allowed to create their "ideal teaching and learning" academy
- every child is valued and provided challenging options, without limits

- the "culture" demands high expectations and tolerates "no excuses"
- accountability is expected and celebrated; and transparent
- community partnerships:
 - with City Council that have promoted multiple successful building programs
 - with Hall County Schools to create a better tax sharing agreement
- seeking grants to provide millions of dollars to support our children and not burden local taxpayers.

The Gainesville City School Board had the courage to demand a new direction and accountability in 2001!

I would also request for you to review any comparisons of salary and to go beyond the simplistic review of the superintendent's salary.

Perhaps you would consider:

- small district superintendents provide the same services as large district superintendents, without the large central office staff; thus what does the central office support staff include and cost between districts?
- during the tenure of Steve Ballowe, the "Gainesville Model" has been created, implemented and proven; thus what are the achievements or proven model of any comparable superintendent?
- the Gainesville School Board expected Steve Ballowe to "earn" any compensation by working 3 years before an annuity was granted; thus what requirements for earned annuity are in place for any comparable superintendent?
- the Board required 6 years of quality performance before a retirement purchase was "earned"; again what "earned" requirements are in place for comparable superintendents?
- the success of the "Gainesville Model" has opened many doors that many superintendents would leap through. I, Steven E. Ballowe, have committed to the children of Gainesville and the Gainesville School Board, with a "buy-out provision" in case I broke my contract; thus what protections exist with other comparable contracts?

What is the consistency of leadership, with a proven track record for creating outstanding results for children, and the loyalty to a school district worth?

The 2008 Gainesville School Board will have to determine what value the leadership of Steven E. Ballowe has been for our children and community and the value of my personal commitment to the Gainesville school family.

I will guarantee that you can certainly get many individuals to work at a reduced rate!

Only the board can determine the value of leadership deserved by our children to guarantee each child's success!

Sincerely,



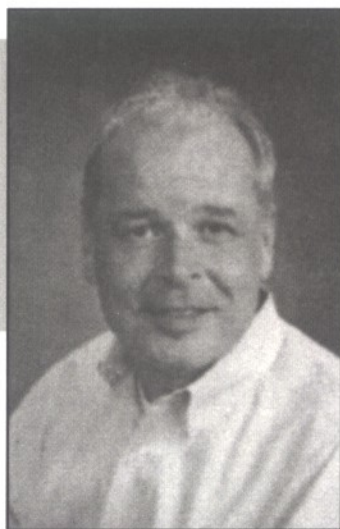
Dr. Steven E. Ballowe, Superintendent
Gainesville City School System

Cc: Gainesville City School Board
Senior staff
Mr. Eric Oliver, candidate
Mrs. Maria Caulkins, candidate

Voters across Gainesville are outraged at the city school board's recent actions. It's time to make some major adjustments in the board and its thinking. Please take a look:

School System	Hall County	Gainesville
Students	25606	6136
Schools	33	7
Employees	3400	719
Superintendent's Salary + Benefits	\$183,500	\$240,000+ ³

It's time to change the system – let your voice be heard to bring common business sense to the city school board.



**Elect
SAMMY SMITH**

*Join the campaign—
may we put a sign
in your yard?*

Cast your vote October 29-November 2 at the Elections Office next to Lakeshore Mall from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Vote November 6 at the Georgia Mountains Center from 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

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