

November 13, 2018

To the members of the Biloxi School Board,

My name is Victoria Moon Conway. I have been the Administrative Assistant in Child Nutrition for 10 years, 3 months. What an honor it has been to work for Biloxi Schools, where five generations of my family have attended. My mother, Lee Ann Dubaz, has been with the District for 36 years. I have always had the intention to follow in her footsteps and career-path with Biloxi Schools.

After being hired in 2008, I immediately and on my own initiative, returned to school at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) to earn a Certification in Child Nutrition Management. When the US Dept. of Agriculture, who our department is governed by, changed the guidelines for advancement in Child Nutrition, I went on to Mississippi State University (MSU) to finish my Undergraduate Degree. I love my job. I go to work, I do what is requested of me but most importantly, I keep my nose out of trouble. Last month I felt forced by the actions of the Board to do something I had no intention of doing; becoming a whistleblower.

I try to always model my behavior after the example set by my family and most importantly my grandparents, Lloyd and Barbara Moon, who have been ardent supporters of our Schools and City. My grandfather credits his successes in life to the teachers of Biloxi Public Schools, whom without, he likely would not have graduated, as he lived in a time where young men worked to support their families. My grandfather's photo hangs in this Board Room as class President, orator and Mr. BHS of the Biloxi High Class of 1951. He went on to open a construction business with my grandmother and you will find his name listed on many of the building plaques in this District. My grandparents taught me to love Biloxi, to do for your community and to always be an honest and good person. Daily, I try to live by their example.

A number of years ago things began to change in the District and in my little insulated area I began to see things that set off alarms that were not only unethical but illegal. I can tell you that even with your new whistleblower policy, there is a fear of retaliation. My mother came to you in good faith representing a group of honest, hard-working employees to inform you of impropriety and illegal activities going on in this District. Instead of standing behind us, you turned a detailed list over to the Superintendent. Since your decision to take the information you were given and to hand it over to the perpetrators the following things have happened:

The Friday after the initial board meeting, my boss – the Child Nutrition Director – returned from an out of town trip 3 days early. The Child Nutrition Director went straight to the CFO's Office and when she arrived I believe this is when he informed her that I had reported to the Board about indiscretions and illegal activities in our department. You see, that list you gave the Superintendent all but said my name. There were things on that list only my boss, the Director of Chartwells, and I would have known about. You handed them a big red arrow pointing at me and I have had to suffer every day since then.

My boss went from being kind and sweet to no longer speaking to me. Daily I can expect her to say only "I am leaving" and "OK" when I tell her I'm leaving. My very presence makes her so angry she slams doors and file cabinet drawers, tosses paperwork on my desk, whispers in the back room, has even shut me out of her office all because she can't stand to be in the same room with me. Chartwells has been on lock down too and won't speak to me either. This past weekend I went on school business leave with my co-workers including a group of our school cafeteria managers. I was completely ostracized. I went to meetings and classes alone; I ate alone. It was unbearable to be away from my

children for a weekend to have been treated so poorly. So, I sit in my office at Lopez in silence every day, surrounded by people that hate me. All because you gave them a list that directly implicated me, my mother and others who came to you in good faith.

The fear of retaliation is why it took so long for anyone to come forward in the first place. Directly after the list was handed over to the Superintendent, my mother called to recount an incident where she was intimidated. I believe she has shared what happened with some of you. I also know that if the Administration wants you gone, it will happen. The CFO has a reputation of firing people to whom he or his immediate circle have an aversion. He personally had me watch a teacher from CTC on the cameras because his girlfriend had an issue with the teacher. I know that I am at risk of retaliation every day when I come to work. I have also personally witnessed cover-up in my own department immediately following your handing over the list.

I said previously that the Board forced me to become a whistleblower. You see, I did as some of you suggested the anonymous letter writer should have done and we came to you. My mother came to you for me and others! However, when I knew that my identity had been revealed I was forced to turn over everything to the auditors. We are innocent employees in this District with nothing to gain and everything to lose coming to the School Board with information that needed your immediate attention; instead of believing us, you looked after the best interest of those accused. Your own Board Attorney called my mother and asked her to turn over her evidence to him for safe keeping!

At this point how can I be expected to trust the Board, I certainly do not trust your attorney, I can't trust my superiors, I can't go to Personnel, to my boss, to her boss -- the CFO, to the Superintendent. I have no one to protect me. I no longer feel safe. I don't eat, I don't sleep, I think about leaving a job I love so much. I didn't ask to know what I know or to be in this situation you put me in. Who is protecting my interests and the interests of my co-workers who are also coming forward?

What keeps me going is that I know what I did is the right thing for Biloxi Schools, for the citizens of this great City and because just as my grandparents have been role models to me, I have two little boys who are the light of my life and who look to me every day to be an example. I find my strength in them and in my family. I know that God is watching over me. I love my job and will fight to make things right in this District. I love Biloxi! I am Biloxi!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Moon Conway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Victoria Moon Conway