

# **Statement of Board of Education President Patricia O’Neill**

February 3, 2015

Today, the Montgomery County Board of Education and Superintendent Joshua Starr reached an agreement regarding Dr. Starr's future with the district. Under this agreement, Dr. Starr will not be appointed to a new four-year contract. The Board has granted Dr. Starr's request to be released from his contract early, on February 16.

Over the past few weeks, the Board of Education has been deliberating Dr. Starr's future at MCPS and whether to appoint him to another four-year contract. This is part of our statutory obligation, as outlined in state law. After much discussion, the Board and Dr. Starr agreed it would be in the best interest of the district to appoint a new leader to carry forward the Board’s vision.

The agreement reached today will allow the Board to move forward with a national search for a new superintendent and will allow Dr. Starr to pursue other professional opportunities. It is a fair agreement that allows both sides to focus on the future.

The Board deeply appreciates the work he has done in our district over the past three-and-a-half years. He is a thoughtful, intelligent leader and we wish him nothing but the very best in the future.

The Board will quickly begin the search for a new superintendent. The first step will take place later this month with the hiring of a search firm to assist us in this work. We will move as quickly as possible in this process, with a goal of having a new superintendent in place by July 1. But we will also engage in a deliberative process so we find the best person for the job.

During this time of transition, the Board has recommended Mr. Larry Bowers, our chief operating officer, to serve as interim superintendent. Under state law, his appointment must be approved by Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Lillian Lowery, who I have spoken with. Larry is a 37-year veteran of MCPS and has served as chief operating officer for the past 16 years. He knows the system inside and out and I can think of no one more suited to provide the stable, even-handed leadership we need in this time of transition.

While I know these types of transitions can be unsettling, I want to be clear: This district has been around for a long time and it is bigger than any one person or one

group of people. This is a great system because of the outstanding teachers, administrators and support professionals that we have in our schools, and the strong support we have in our community--and that does not change.

I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure all students receive a world-class education that prepares them for success in the 21st century.

Dr. Starr will now have some brief remarks and then I am happy to answer a few questions.