

December 7, 2023

Stacey Woolley, District 1
President
Tulsa School Board

Cc Vice President John Croisant
Cc E'lana Ashley
Cc Susan Lamkin
Cc Diamond Marshall
Cc Dr. Jerry Griffin
Cc Dr. Jenettie Marshall

Subject: Community Members Call for the Permanent Appointment of Dr. Ebony Johnson as the Tulsa Public Schools Superintendent

Dear Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education,

We, the undersigned, write to you with shared concern and a united voice as faith leaders, legislators, community advocates and concerned Tulsans regarding the critical decision to appoint Dr. Ebony Johnson, Ed.D, permanent school superintendent for Tulsa Public Schools, the state's largest school district in Oklahoma, serving nearly 34,000 students at 77 schools.

Dr. Johnson's appointment as permanent superintendent is not only logical but necessary to help achieve the outcomes and expectations set forth by this body, the State Department of Education, the State Superintendent, and families.

No one knows this district or its unique needs like Dr. Johnson. Her career began as a classroom teacher at Monroe Middle School in 1999, and she has served as a school leader at Academy Central Elementary, Central Junior High, Central High School, and McLain High School, where she implemented strategies and best practices that resulted in school turnaround in critical areas. She has overseen important initiatives that resulted in a 27 percent decrease in out-of-school suspensions systemwide and is responsible for district-wide adoption of student and family support services that address mental, social, and emotional health.

But long before she was Dr. Johnson, she was just Ebony Johnson, a McLain Titan who attended Gilcrease Middle School and Walt Whitman Elementary School before that. She is now the proud mother of a Will Rogers High School graduate and an aspiring Booker T. Washington graduate. Tulsa Public Schools is in Dr. Johnson's blood and in her heart.

While conducting a national search for a district the size of Tulsa Public Schools would be conventional in regular times, we can all agree these are not conventional times. By refusing to name Dr. Johnson as permanent superintendent, the board of education risks failing the district and the expectations this very body put forth in the following ways:

- **Practical Implementation of Changes:** Tulsa Public Schools needs a stable and permanent leader to meet the State Superintendent's and this body's expectations and directives. Dr. Johnson's permanent appointment will facilitate the smooth implementation of Tulsa Public Schools' strategic improvement plan.
- **Strategic Executive Hires:** Crucial executive positions are currently vacant or become vacant very soon. Vacant leadership positions contribute to our school system's overall instability and effectiveness in implementing the changes this body and the State Department of Education have demanded and demanded in a condensed time frame.
- **Qualifications and Dedication:** Dr. Johnson is eminently qualified for the position, holding a Ph.D. and possessing a proven track record of turning schools around. Her local roots as a Tulsa Public Schools student, mother, teacher and administrator further strengthen her connection and commitment to our community. Moreover, her genuine care, affection for our students and their families, and unwavering determination to improve our school system have not gone unnoticed by us or the community.

During her tenure as interim superintendent, we have closely observed her performance as faith leaders, legislators, concerned members of the community, and families of Tulsa Public Schools students. Dr. Johnson has demonstrated the competence, commitment, and, most importantly, faith in our students and families to turn our schools around. Through this observation, we have concluded that Dr. Johnson's leadership is necessary and transformative for our school system. We urge you to act appropriately and swiftly by naming Dr. Johnson the permanent Superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools with a three year contract.

We thank you for your time and appreciate your attention to this matter. We also look forward to witnessing the continued progress and success of Tulsa Public Schools under the capable leadership of Dr. Johnson.

With Profound hope,

Monroe Nichols
OK House Dist-72

Vanessa Hall-Harper
District 1 City Council

Lori Decter Wright
District 7 City Council

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Rev. Jamaal Dyer-Pastor
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