

RESOLUTION NO. RS2019-1597

A resolution calling for MNPS School Board Member Jill Speering to retract and apologize for her suggestion that teachers wear masks to a School Board meeting in the expression of their purported disapproval of Director Dr. Shawn Joseph.

WHEREAS, Jill Speering is a board member for Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS); and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Speering has been an outspoken opponent of Dr. Shawn Joseph's leadership as the Director of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, on January 8, 2019, the MNPS School Board convened a meeting; and in the days prior to that meeting, Mrs. Speering submitted a text message stating in part that, "[i]f teachers are fearful to reveal their identity, please wear a mask"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Joseph is MNPS's first African-American Director; and

WHEREAS, wearing masks for the express purpose of concealing identities of those expressing opposition in such circumstances is, at the least, extremely insensitive and evokes comparisons to the historical persecution of African-Americans by the Ku Klux Klan, whose members also wore and continue to wear masks; and

WHEREAS, encouraging teachers to engage in such behavior – whether an intentional homage to the Ku Klux Klan or not, is inappropriate and unbecoming of an MNPS Board Member.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as requesting that MNPS Board Member Jill Speering retract her statement suggesting that teachers wear masks to a school board meeting, and that Mrs. Speering formally apologize to Dr. Shawn Joseph, to her fellow Board members, and to the public at large for her insensitive, inappropriate, and offensive remarks.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Erica Gilmore
Member of Council, At-Large