

December 18, 2012

The Stoughton School District is transitioning to the state-mandated evaluation tools during the 2012 school year for all educators. This process should be in place by Spring. We have used a discussion-based evaluation for two years in a row. However, state law and the superintendent's contract of employment govern the process of superintendent evaluation. We also believe that, inherent in the process for all educators, is the principle that constructive criticism and positive reinforcement are vital to the process of employee evaluation. Every good manager knows this, and we are confident that our superintendent, department heads, principals and other administrators will follow this view.

Despite the requirement that we follow guidelines and regulations established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Committee Member Erdem Ural has decided to develop his own evaluation tool. This is in contrast with the decisions of the Stoughton School Committee as determined and voted upon in a public meeting and, as regards the superintendent of schools, developed in collaboration with School Superintendent, Dr. Rizzi.

There are three general areas and 16 goals within those general areas that we developed in collaboration with Dr. Rizzi and which the school committee agreed with her to use, following on to her previous year's evaluation.

We take exception to what Dr. Ural has done for these reasons:

1) He invented his own numeric rating system and persists in using it, despite its inconsistency with the requirements of state law and regulation which discourage a numerical grading system in all evaluation tools under the new educator evaluation law.

2) He is not confining his evaluation to the goals within the three areas agreed upon by the School Committee and as is consistent with Dr. Rizzi's contract of employment. *

3) He has not limited his evaluation to the year ending in June 2012 but has included comments on performance outside the scope of the formal evaluation as agreed.

4) The evaluation is not confined to the Superintendent.

5) Goals are to be developed by the Superintendent in discussion with the School Committee - as is required under the new system to which we are transitioning.

6) His evaluation, discussed publicly, includes references to a superintendent's character with which we disagree and which are inaccurate and inappropriate.

In summary, the School Committee adamantly disagrees with Dr. Ural's evaluation and the statements about Dr. Rizzi's performance. Statements regarding her character and style are false, offensive and possibly illegal. Dr. Ural makes assumptions about the Superintendent's intent that are absurd and unsupported. His claims about her trustworthiness and attitude toward the safety of our students are outrageous and offensive. Dr. Ural's evaluation veers into character assassination of the Superintendent, which has legal implications.

Dr. Ural makes claims regarding phone calls, safety, and rumors that are not supported by a shred of data or evidence.

In short, the School Committee does not agree with his evaluation and will not incorporate these comments into an aggregate evaluative document.

While Dr. Ural has a right to offer his opinion, the School Committee does not condone character assassination, unsupported claims, assumptions of intent, and disparagement of other boards in the process.

*MASC Handbook on School Committee-Superintendent Partnerships:

What the Superintendent Has a Right to Expect from the School Committee

Fair, honest job evaluation based on agreed upon criteria