

## Camelot Vote Remarks\_MCS D Board Meeting\_4\_17\_17

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Good Evening Board Members, Mr. Ellington:

I trust you have your copy of my prepared remarks. I'll read them in order to stick with the 5-minute limit and have time to invite all of you to the April 18 parents forum co-sponsored by Camelot Education and the Southern Anti-Racism Network at Mildred Terry Library, 6-8pm.

On March 27, a vote of the board was unanimous to take a vote on April 10 on the Camelot Education contract proposal. On April 10, a motion was made to vote on the Camelot proposal and properly seconded.

In the discussion, Board Member Chambers combed through the contract and made statements indicating the MCS D was not protected from liabilities that could cost millions of dollars. Ms. Chambers proposed that the vote be put off.

Clearly, the board chair knew nothing of the unreadiness expressed by Ms. Chambers. In her stunning presentation. Ms. Chambers mentioned she had received numerous phone calls on the Camelot issue. I'm sure that's true. What isn't known is whether Ms. Chambers spoke with any of her constituents who called and emailed her. Her constituents I know reported that she never responded to their calls to ascertain her position on the Camelot Education proposal.

I find the behavior of Ms. Chambers lacking in transparency and accountability. She is the only at-large member of the board. We are all her constituents. Did she only communicate with community members who called for a "No" vote? I would like to hear her answer on whether she engaged in selective communication with constituents on the Camelot Education proposal.

On April 10, a lot went wrong. As I watched Board Chair Pat Hugley Green attempt to support Ms. Chambers, I saw a train wreck about to happen. The recommendation for Ms. Chambers to make a substitute motion to "kick the can down the road" and avoid the vote on the Camelot proposal was out-of-order. And maybe illegal.

I left the board meeting thinking the substitute motion would fail on a 4-4 vote since Mr. Cantrell was absent and only 8 board members were present.

I learned later that Ms. Chambers got her way on a 5-3 vote. Shocking! As stunning as Ms. Chambers was, she was wrong on so many levels. She was wrong not to ask her questions of the board attorney before the April 10 board meeting. She was wrong not to speak with the board chair about her concerns. If Ms. Chambers was not ready to vote, her best option was to abstain.

The other option was for Ms. Chambers to make a motion for reconsideration of the March 27 vote to vote on April 10. Had she prevailed, her new motion to vote in 90 days would've been in order.

Ms. Chambers owes the board chair, all board members and the whole community an apology. The up or down vote that didn't happen on April 10, should take place this evening. The work session vote on Camelot was approved unanimously. Another surprise in this messy process on Camelot fraught with

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secrecy and intrigue. I fully expected Mr. Myers to object to the Superintendent's recommendation to move the vote from March 27 to April 10.

Taking a vote at a work session is not usual and customary for the MCSO board. However, all board members agreed to vote on the Camelot proposal on April 10. What Ms. Chambers did was self-centered and totally wrong.

Ms. Buckner, I hear you were the deciding vote to give Ms. Chambers what she wanted. I think it was a tactical move on your part to keep the Camelot proposal alive since Ms. Chambers threatened a "No" vote at a meeting of 8 members of the board.

At the March 27 meeting, I pointed out that 6 of the 9 board members are women. Some of you may be in the same sororities. Women supporting women is good. However, we must support each other in ways that are principled and not in ways that are selfish and self-centered.

The vote on Camelot should take place this evening. The parents who need to know what options they have available for their children with special needs should not have to wait any longer.

The therapeutic services for students who pull their ears off, gouge their eyes out, beat their heads against the wall, can't stand for their feet to touch the floor, can't stand to be touched, can be provided by Camelot Education. Camelot Education is an expert provider of education services for students with special needs. That fact should not be in dispute.

The additional alternative education program contract is a step up and away from the impact of the kangaroo court known as "tribunals". Students getting long-term suspensions go to the alternative school where they get suspended at the rate of 50%. Exclusionary discipline does not work. Exclusionary discipline denies students their constitutional right to "an adequate public education"

Camelot does not suspend students in their programs. I know this because I asked them, Ms. Chambers.

Time to vote. If you're still undecided, exercise your democratic right to abstain. You don't have the right to stop a vote because you haven't made up your mind. Abstain or vote yes or no. Or don't vote at all. No board member has the right to tell other board members they can't vote.

The question of Camelot should've been settled on April 10. The whole board voted unanimously to vote on Camelot on April 10.

Time to settle the question this evening. Please call the question, Madame Chair.

Thank you.