

Dear Members of the Arlington School Committee,

As Leaders of the Sharon Racial Equity Alliance (SREA), we are writing to express SREA's strong support for Dr. Greer's candidacy for the open Superintendent position within the Arlington School District.

Dr. Greer excels wherever she goes. We are sure you are aware of her qualifications and the history of her tenure in Sharon, but we would like to highlight some aspects of her work.

Prior to Dr. Greer's arrival in Sharon, she served as the Assistant Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools for four years. As she transitioned into her role as Superintendent in Sharon, Dr. Greer received numerous complimentary farewells from the town of Cambridge including that of Karen Dobak, the Co-Chairwoman of the Parent Advisory Council on Special Education, who stated, "Victoria Greer is one of the best hires Cambridge has ever made." A Cambridge School Committee member, Emily Dexter remarked, "Dr. Greer has done a wonderful job in Cambridge and brought great energy to CPS" and the Cambridge Superintendent at the time stated that Dr. Greer was "a tremendous part of [the] team, bringing her strength, vision, and leadership."

During Dr. Greer's three years serving as the Superintendent of Sharon Public Schools, she demonstrated a student-first approach that centers on academic excellence. These qualities of Dr. Greer's work are represented by Former School Committee Chair Jonathan Hitter's declaration that "every decision she makes in my opinion always has in mind what is best for the students and their learning," a sentiment which Former Sharon School Committee Member Fern Fergus echoed stating that Dr. Greer was "always focusing on her most important constituents: the students of Sharon Public Schools." As an integral part of her fundamental approach, Dr. Greer has also worked diligently to improve equitable access to education for underrepresented students in the Sharon School District. As part of these efforts, Dr. Greer was the catalyst for the Equity Diagnostic and Analysis that was completed in the summer of 2019. To date, this report has become the foundation for the creation of Sharon's three-year Equity Plan. Additionally, in the midst of Dr. Greer's demanding schedule and during a global pandemic, she intentionally carved out time to meet with members of SREA's K-12 Committee to discuss our equity work within the schools.

In 2019 alone Dr. Greer was honored with the Black Excellence on the Hill Award from the MA Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and her visionary leadership allowed Sharon High School to move from #10 in the state to #6, according to Boston Magazine's ranking of

Massachusetts High Schools. In addition, in January of this year Dr. Greer was appointed as the Chair of Massachusetts Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Council by the state's Commissioner of Education. During the midst of a worldwide pandemic Dr. Greer continued to lead our district effectively, prioritizing a safe reopening plan and emphasizing high-quality education for students with a significant social-emotional learning component.

As Superintendent Dr. Greer exhibited the authenticity of her commitment to students. Dr. Greer was masterful in her handling of a protest held at the high school against a teacher abusing his position of power with young women. She was clear with the students that they weren't going to get into trouble for speaking up, that their concerns were taken very seriously, and that student well-being was paramount. Her follow-up was consistent with what she promised. The adults who had let this situation fester were held accountable. Dr. Greer handled the situation gracefully and assertively.

Dr. Greer also demonstrated responsiveness and flexibility. After her first performance review, some members of our school committee asked that she improve regarding her transparency and communication with the public. Dr. Greer responded to this promptly by instituting well publicized chances to take a walk with the superintendent and meet with her in other fora, improving social media communications and newsletters, and increasingly, the transparency of her administration generally, which was favorably assessed on her next performance review.

Despite Dr. Greer's numerous accomplishments within our district, she faced significant challenges, ranging from managing a school district in the height of the pandemic to navigating a hostile and discriminatory work environment within the Sharon School Committee. SREA's members frequently attend School Committee meetings and can personally attest to the demeaning and racist treatment that Dr. Greer endured from members of the current Sharon School Committee. One of our members, Ruth Beckerman-Rodau, a resident of Sharon who has been watching Sharon's School Committee meetings for the two decades she has lived here, noticed early in Dr. Greer's tenure that she had never seen a Superintendent treated with the level of disrespect and micromanagement that Dr. Greer faced from the Sharon School Committee. The Sharon Racial Equity Alliance formed in response to the Sharon High School Black Student Union's call for equity in a presentation they made to the Sharon School Committee, and to the treatment of Dr. Greer.

In our opinion, certain members of the School Committee and a subset of our community, in addition to their biased treatment of Dr. Greer, have operated under a mistaken assumption that the pursuit of excellence and the pursuit of equity are incompatible or contraindicated. While claiming to value equity, they have questioned efforts to improve equity in the Sharon schools at

what they see as the expense of efforts directly targeting high performing students. This rationale neglects key aspects of the equation: the excellence that our schools are deprived of due to bias, the immense value that learning in an equitable environment brings to all students, and the immoral lesson our actions teach our students when we do not prioritize eliminating fundamental injustices in our schools. Misguided attempts to maintain color blindness and make empty platitudes about equity while maintaining systems that prioritize the needs of the privileged is what has led us to this current era of fraught racial politics and social division. It is time for a new approach, and we are gravely disappointed that Sharon has clung to old ideas and failed to understand and embrace the value of equity, at great expense.

Furthermore, despite the Sharon School Committee's decision to place Dr. Greer on administrative leave, the committee continues to utilize and build upon Dr. Greer's work, sharing these efforts with the public, including a multi-year equity and inclusion plan for the district. SPS continues to benefit from Dr. Greer's dedication to improving equitable access to education, particularly for ESL students, students of color, and students with IEPs and 504 plans. Her efforts also included the intentional hiring of administrators of color and substantial efforts to reform the curriculum to better reflect the district's students and provide a more well-rounded account of history. In each Sharon School Committee open meeting since September, community members have raised their collective concerns that Dr. Greer has been placed on administrative leave without cause and the community has continued to highlight the countless contributions that Dr. Greer made to our school community and beyond.

As a direct result of the Sharon School Committee's decisions, our district has lost an experienced leader in academic excellence who undertook important steps to implement a visionary plan to build our district into a more equitable learning environment. While SREA regrets the loss of Dr. Greer's experience and vision in our district, we are confident that Dr. Greer's leadership and expertise will be a strong asset to the Arlington School District. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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