

IN THE MATTER OF
REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF
LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS
SHAYLA ADAMS-STAFFORD,
KENNETH HARRIS, DAVID
MURRAY, AND JOSHUA
THOMAS

BEFORE THE
MARYLAND
STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Order No. OR 23-05

ORDER

The State Board received a request from the Prince George’s County Board of Education (“local board”) to remove Shayla Adams-Stafford, Kenneth Harris, David Murray, and Joshua Thomas as members of the local board based on the recommendations of the Prince George’s County Board of Education Ethics Advisory Panel (“EAP”).¹ On July 23, 2021, the EAP issued reports regarding each of the named board members recommending that the local board take action to remove the members from the board for various breaches of ethical conduct. On June 9, 2022, the local board voted to accept the recommendations of the EAP and thereafter sought the removal of these members from the State Board.

Meanwhile, on August 26, 2022, the Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education (“OIGE”) issued an Investigative Report Summary (“OIGE Report”) regarding the investigation of the named members by the EAP. The OIGE report found that the EAP investigation was unreliable and that the EAP committed various violations of local board policies throughout its investigation. Of particular relevance are the OIGE’s findings that the EAP failed to provide a complete and fact-based report, that information contained in the report was improperly referenced or factually inaccurate, and that the EAP failed to include in its final report exonerating statements made by witnesses. (OIGE Report at 15). On September 15, 2022, while the removal request was still pending before the State Board, the local board voted to accept the OIGE report and rescind the vote taken on June 9, 2022 to remove the board members at issue based on the recommendations of the EAP. *See* 9/15/22 Meeting Video at 49:00-1:39:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX2LC06Hnpc&list=PL4585E4C6234DE895&index=33>).²

Therefore, based on the local board’s September 15, 2022, vote to rescind the removal request, it is this 28th day of February 2023, by the Maryland State Board of Education, ORDERED, that the request to issue charges for removal of board members Shayla Adams-Stafford, Kenneth Harris, and David Murray is dismissed. It is further, ORDERED, that the matter is dismissed as moot regarding former board member Joshua Thomas.

¹ Joshua Thomas is no longer a member of the local board, thus the request for removal is moot as to Mr. Thomas.

² A local board member claims that a complaint was filed alleging violations of the Open Meetings Act with regard to the September 15, 2022 local board meeting and vote. However, as of the date of this Order, there is no evidence before the State Board of any recommendation or determination by the Open Meetings Compliance Board or a court finding an Open Meetings Act violation nor invalidating the local board’s September 15 vote. Further, despite requests by counsel for the State Board that the local board clarify the status of the local board’s removal request in light of the September 15 vote, there has been no such clarification.

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Signatures on File:

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Abstained:
Shawn D. Bartley

Absent:
Gail H. Bates
Joan Mele-McCarthy
Holly Wilcox