

Shanel Gayden
Public Comments
June 6, 2019
School Board Meeting

Greetings, Board Chair, Vice Chair, Board and Community,

Tonight I am speaking on behalf of the Jefferson-Houston Community. The community presents this letter for your review and consideration.

We humbly submit this letter on behalf of the parents, caregivers, guardians and mentors that make up the Jefferson-Houston community, in support of Mrs. Karima Wade remaining as the Social Worker for Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 School. As the school Social Worker for the past 8 years, Mrs. Wade has contributed immensely to the growth and success of many students and families at Jefferson-Houston School. In addition, she has been a constant and stabilizing force through many changes that have occurred. These changes include but are not limited to moving to a new building, implementation of new student codes of conduct along with several administration and staff changes.

Through all of this, she has been an integral piece to the solution for the most vulnerable families at Jefferson-Houston, and helped them through many of the issues, barriers and concerns students and families face. She has authentically served as a leader, who is determined and compassionate about truly making the difference for every child. The sacrifices she has made exceeds her title as a Social Worker. Each year she has strived to accomplish school based goals in all areas especially attendance, and more importantly, has raised the bar for every student's emotional health and well-being.

Mrs. Wade has been an asset of creating a culture that will lead to a diverse and emotionally healthy school. In her many years of service between both buildings, she has eagerly created opportunities for Jefferson-Houston to shine against all odds, and the level of trust she has built inside and outside of the school is remarkable. Her leadership among the administration, teachers and support staff has always been an effective collaboration tool, and she does not hesitate to extend that collaboration to community partners. Throughout the many years of constant negative media reported about Jefferson-Houston, she has remained the number one cheerleader and is willing to do whatever it takes to help Jefferson-Houston rise above. The level of positivity that Mrs. Wade has contributed to the atmosphere has been a motivating factor to keep the fight strong for the overall success of students, and a reason why many parents have not given up and requested their students transfer out of the school.

Lastly, Mrs. Wade has always kept an open mind in creating solutions to community concerns, academic barriers, and being a consistent help to solving family dynamics that affect the development of the students. In the past, she has been the school leader for Parent Fact Friday, a parental support group established in January 2013 by the PTA Leader Shanelle Gayden. In addition, she has gone door-to-door to build bridges with parents who may have literacy or

other challenges that present barriers for parental involvement. Countless times, Mrs. Wade has given her time, support and creative energy to serve the families of Jefferson-Houston, and through those efforts many success stories have been revealed and certainly created a special light for the school and community.

As there are many more changes underway for the 2019-2020 school year, we ask that Mrs. Wade's departure NOT be one of them. Her leadership as the Social Worker for Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 School is truly needed and required as Jefferson-Houston continues to move forward. The community will stand beside her, as we hope that this letter of support and signatures serve as a witness to the critical need of keeping her in place.

In addition to this letter it is quite disturbing to recently find out that Mrs. Wade no longer has the same office. She has been moved to the library which is on the second floor. Mrs. Wade's old office has been turned into a conference room.

Respectfully,

Jefferson-Houston Community