

Dear Chairman Bolin and LCSD #1 School Board,

This letter is meant to formally bring forward a complaint against Dr. Margaret Crespo, Jim Fraley, Eric Jackson and Vickie Thompson regarding their competencies and inability to professionally lead Laramie County School District #1. I was waiting to bring this forward until after June 30th for fear of continued harassment, retaliation, and concerns over the loss of my retention bonus and insurance during my transition to my new district. During the past 2 years I have experienced the following issues outlined below that ultimately forced my hand to leave my home of 16 years. The repetitive harassment and targeting of not only myself but my wife and children made it clear that the only way for me to protect them and to be the effective educator I am was to leave LCSD #1.

Harassment/Unprofessional Behavior/Hostile Work Environment – Margaret Crespo, Jim Fraley, Eric Jackson, and Vicki Thompson

1. Physical threats from supervisors.

During a discussion with Mr. Fraley which I had set up to discuss and share with him all the efforts and systems we have in place at the tier two level he physically threatened to fight me slapping the table and threatening my employment and future if I did not agree with him. Mr. Fraley was yelling and hitting the table so loudly that his secretary got up from around her desk and came and shut the door so that he could continue to berate me. I used the phrase “My people are doing the lord’s work at JJHS.” He slapped the table again yelling at me at the top of his lungs to not make this about religion. I shared with him it was a figure of speech only and apologized if it struck a nerve with him. He continued to yell and ask me if I wanted to be “done here” in reference to my employment. As a long time, athlete my chest was pumping harder than before in my life. When this information was shared with Dr. Crespo, she did not refer it to HR but told me “...to let it go and give him grace.” As someone who holds a Superintendent’s license in multiple states, Dr. Crespo should have immediately launched an investigation of a hostile work environment through human resources at a minimum. This was not done nor was I contacted or reached out to for an interview. What was done will be outlined further in the targeting and pattern of continued harassment by subordinates of both Dr. Crespo and Jim Fraley.

I would add that the very nature of the above discussion has been sought out by state and national groups. Currently these same systems I was trying to share and educate Mr. Jim Fraley on have been adopted by Cody MS and schools in Casper, WY. Additionally, I have been invited to share this system at the National Principals Conference this summer in Denver, CO. Unfortunately, I was unable to simply share this with our own people due to listening blocks and a severe inferiority complex driven by both Jim and Dr. Crespo.

2. Subordinates are being tasked with targeting myself and my family.

In discussions around snow days being turned into virtual days Mr. Fraley addressed our impoverished students at JJHS and the Southside community in derogatory terms which only sought to further the divide between the haves and have nots. In a district leadership meeting when principals questioned calling a virtual day instead of taking an available snow day in our calendar with only 3 hours to implement and no instructional fore planning Mr. Jim Fraley stated, “Even poor kids have phones.” He further went on unabated saying some people may be upset but then again someone is always upset. This is flagrant and unprofessional when we are charged with nurturing and caring for our communities’

children. There is a strong sense of distrust in the community due to the control issues and lack of transparency from this administration.

Eric Jackson was then sent to deal with me after questioning why we were widening the gap for poor and traditionally marginalized groups of students by Mr. Fraley. Mr. Jackson repeatedly referred to being sent to “deal” with me over the course of one year as my evaluator. When asked for specific examples of his vague threats of being put on a plan of improvement for this he stated, “Well you know why.” This conversation and others were directly recorded as evidence of the mistreatment and overreach of power by Dr. Margaret Crespo, Jim Fraley, and their subordinates. Mr. Jackson further threatened to place me on a plan for requesting another principal and I lead a restorative conversation between teachers from our two buildings.

Yet again my employment was threatened by Mr. Jackson when I sent an email to Dr. Leiseth at Jessup Elementary requesting specific information on why my second-grade daughter was receiving identical work she did during her first-grade year. My daughter had the same instructor for both years and her 2nd grade year was in a combination class where they were merely redoing the 1st grade curriculum. (Literally identical worksheets which I still had in a file from the previous year. I could have simply turned in the previous assignment to save the teacher time.) Dr. Leiseth shared with me they did not want a combination class but were forced to by the district office. No training had been provided to the teachers being asked to teach two curriculums simultaneously to students who entered public education as kindergartners during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. The content and concerns were not in question, but it was put back to me that I was in the wrong due to utilizing my laramie1.org email address. I had notified both Eric Jackson and Jim Fraley of what was going on. No contact from either came on the issue or an investigation from the principal or district office on the malpractice being placed on my daughter. To date the issue has never been addressed or brought forward. When this issue took place, I asked if I was unable to call on behalf of my child due to my cell phone being district supplied as well as my office phone. Mr. Jackson never responded to me and therefore this was brought to Vicki Thompson. No one ever communicated with me on this matter.

3. Unsafe learning environments for staff and students.

JJHS has the most comprehensive system for tracking and intervening for students both academically and behaviorally. Several statewide and national entities have recognized it and requested we share our work so that our brothers and sisters across the country could benefit from it. After exercising the entire pyramid on multiple students and repetitive jumping of other students in our education space we have requested some of those students be long term suspended. These students have been immediately sent back to our building based on padding of student numbers based on race, disability, and gender. Specific subgroups may not be suspended no matter what threat they pose to students and staff. This speaks highly to the retention issues with both principals and teachers. In a board meeting Mr. Jim Fraley outright lied to the entire board and community specifically stating that principals wanted to keep working with these students. Principals are not required to recommend long term suspension and expulsion for students. This recommendation is only made when the student has superseded the pyramid of interventions available through the school and therefore the district must engage to protect all staff and students against threats of violence. Mr. Fraley continues to this day to revoke suspensions and cite that the principals are the cause. Mr. Fraley’s consistent and blatant disregard for policies and procedures endangers the staff and students at JJHS and all the other schools in LCSD #1.

4. Leading through fear and intimidation.

Leading through fear and intimidation yields compliance not growth, progress, and student outcomes. On multiple occasions both Dr. Crespo and Eric Jackson have stated that they protect us as administrators from the board. This type of speech creates fear and intimidation targeted only at dividing members of the school-based teams into fearing the board and huddling under the "Senior Leadership Team" to be protected from our elected officials. These statements were shared in public principal and district level leadership meetings. This is not only flagrantly poor leadership, but more specific examples of the tactics used to manipulate and control a system to bend it to her will.

5. Early suspension of access to vital curriculum and spending of allocated state and federal funds.

Once it was announced that I would be transitioning to a new school district there was a high number of "accidents" that took place making it difficult to do my job as a principal and provide for our students at JJHS. At the onset it was suggested by Vicki Thompson and Dr. Margaret Crespo that I terminate my contract and leave in January. As shocked as I was that they were so eager to part ways with me, I explained that this would cause undue harm to the students of Johnson JHS (who were traditionally untrusting of adults they did not know and in need of high levels of support) as well as leave a first-grade classroom at Anderson Elementary (one of only two schools meeting academic performance metrics by the WDE) without a teacher. My wife was also employed by the district and Dr. Crespo and Ms. Thompson were unaware that my wife was a teacher. Upon learning this they stated they would work with me to help transition to the new district throughout the remainder of the year.

However, the help they offered was not accommodating. After accumulating 114 sick days in my 16 years, I was told I could not use a single sick day to transition to Wisconsin. I was told that it was a misuse and breach of policy and practice. I was made aware through district level secretaries during a Title 1 meeting that there were district officials at the senior level misusing sick days on the same day I was told I could not use mine for the transition period. I called and shared this information with Vicki Thompson to notify her. She stated that she would pull an audit to see who it was. Weeks later when an additional issue surrounding my pay came up Vicki Thompson had yet to address the situation. This was all communicated and emailed to Dr. Crespo, Ms. Thompson and board member Tim Bolin and can be accessed through a public record request where she specifically stated that she had not addressed it.

Advancing forward through several more issues HR became more aware and involved with there was complete disregard for policy practice and investigation. On 2/24/23 an email chain with board members and Vicki Thompson went back and forth questioning why 5 full weeks of pay had been deducted. A subordinate of Vicki Thompson was directed to deduct my time after an agreement had been met to have me log my hours worked on behalf of LCSD 1 to be paid for the work I still had to do while being away in Wisconsin. As a contracted employee I was docked pay months into the future for hours I had not missed and may not have missed. After pointing out the egregious nature of the contract breakage the hours were eventually put back. A mortgage was nearly missed and would have been had I not had an urge to check my time allotments. A practice I did not engage in often.

After years of fighting to retain teachers at Title 1 buildings it had been decided that a proposal, I put in place would be allowed at the building level to offer a stipend for teacher retention in hard to fill buildings. After the previous issues took place, I was then notified late in the year that I would not be able to help support the teachers even after state and district level approvals had been given. The money had been earmarked and unspent, but I was unable to utilize federal funds under my purview to aid a struggling community. Further exacerbating the ability of me to staff and provide for a traditionally underserved community.

Additionally curricular materials that I was mandated to provide for our staff and students were revoked at random along with other district level purchasing abilities. Two months prior to the district spending shutdown, I was notified by Ms. Bradshaw's hire for bookkeeper that she was to collect and destroy my district and federal credit cards immediately from the business department. Upon reaching out to several people no one could give me the name of whom sent the directive to limit our school's ability to provide for our students. Spending coupled with the revocation of AVID and Second Step resources with impending timelines coming due exacerbated the hostile working environment. Lastly in this regard the district office took it upon themselves to eliminate me on planning, transition, and pertinent emails many months in advance of my early release. This created further issues addressing the needs of staff and students when important information was not being shared between the district office and Ms. Bradshaw to me.

HR practices – Vicki Thompson

6. Early termination of my wife's teaching position.

Adrienne N. Cox is my wife and she had noticed that her position with our district had been posted for hire in the April time range. When my wife directly asked Ms. Thompson why her job was posted she shared that she had taken me leaving as her resignation coupled with an email of our original intent to move to her teaching team at Anderson Elementary. My wife has taught in the district for 13 years and thus is on continuing contract. She never issued a letter of resignation nor signed any document relinquishing her position. When it was pointed out to Ms. Thompson by myself and my wife that she was violating board policy as there was not a direct letter stating her resignation with her signature, Ms. Thompson finally removed her position posting. At this juncture my wife was going to remain behind in Cheyenne and continue teaching while I worked in Wisconsin for the year. Even as late as June Ms. Thompson cited 1/24/2023 as my wife's date of resignation. My wife was not afforded her negotiated agreement and targeted again due to being a relation of mine. This is yet another misaligned attempt to lie and mislead the board of directors. Ms. Thompson and the rest of the Senior Leadership Team tell the board outright lies and try to intimidate employees for outing their lies. Specifically, being directed not to speak to board members even if we are parents and tax paying members of the community, unlike much of the new central office hired from Colorado by Dr. Crespo.

7. Whistleblowing

Ms. Michaela Bradshaw had requested time off for ten days during the school year where she informed me that she was going on a cruise to "save her marriage". I had approved the travel given the context and we worked out a coverage plan. After Ms. Bradshaw returned from her time off, it was brought to my attention that one of our paras, now hired as the bookkeeper by Ms. Bradshaw, requested 10 days of leave with no pay due to a vacation. It was discovered, that both Ms. Bradshaw and Ms. Fairthorne

were on vacation together out of the country in St. Lucia. To investigate further I looked to Facebook to confirm the rumors. I reached out to Dr. Newton and to Vicki Thompson to address the ethical violation of drinking with subordinates out of the country while school was in session and misleading the premise for the time off. The concerns of hiring Ms. Fairthorne for the bookkeeping position, as her friend, and then the optics of being in control of local and federal tax dollars while partying in a Caribbean location sent the wrong tone to our community. Ms. Thompson told me she would deal with the situation. Subsequently three days later I was asked to turn in my keys and clear out my office.

8. Early involuntary removal

On Friday, the 19th of May, I was texted by Dr. Newton requesting me to meet with him at his office at 3 pm that day. With it being the end of Spring semester and being short three teachers, several support staff, and a BIS I requested to meet at 4 so I could make sure students were on the buses heading home. Dr. Newton offered to meet me at 3 at school. Upon his arrival he shared with me that he was directed by Dr. Crespo, Mr. Fraley, and Ms. Thomspson to come and terminate my employment. He stated that my retention bonus along with my contract and insurance would continue to be paid in full. I would simply not be allowed to work any longer. This came the very day an email was sent requesting why further access to curricular resources was stripped from my access with three weeks left for me to instruct students and staff. When my assistant principal reached out, they were informed that terminating me was simply easier for Dr. Crespo. The board was misled into thinking that I was in agreement with this transaction and that I was informed that it was coming. I was not and have not been in agreement with this decision nor was I aware that it was going to happen. This harsh, emotional reaction to asking for access to do the work that needed to be finished and concerns over unethical practices, was laid down by complete surprise and I was given the afternoon to gather my things. I was never afforded the opportunity to say goodbye to staff and students nor finish the critical work of building the master schedule or finishing the federal Title 1 reporting. These unfinished reports are of high concern as it could result in missed federal funding for future years at JJHS due to their negligence and lack of planning/foresight. Many of the documents that were needed to complete the work for federal reporting were destroyed when all access was taken away and digital files were deleted. Again, further perpetuating the idea of fear and intimidation to keep other principals' in their place.

9. Discrimination based on gender

During Dr. Crespo's tenure she has had 21 leaders leave. Never has there been such a dramatic turnover of talent and personnel. Roles have ranged from district level leaders to principals and assistant principals. Very few administrators hired to replace these members were male and only one to my knowledge was not already an administrator in the district. Award winning principals and leaders from around the state were repetitively stepped over who had 15 years of experience in K-12 schools with at risk populations so that female assistant principals could be hired with 1 –2 years of experience as an assistant principal. The blatant disregard for experience to push a political agenda is staggering. Many of those selected are being set up to fail as they have received little to no guidance and their lack of experience has placed the buildings into turmoil. At Johnson specifically, after my early dismissal my replacement Ms. Bradshaw has already placed 4 members of a team on plans of improvement within her first 10 days on the job. Over half of those placed on plans were members of a protected class at multiple levels and have long standing distinguished careers in our district as well as the military. With the NAACP and other groups coming to aid them this will further take action against the district in the

coming days. Since leaving Johnson there has been an additional turnover of 13 staff members due to the inexperienced and uncoached moves by underqualified individuals. With the most at-risk high school, junior high, and its elementary feeders all being led by similar demographic and inexperienced leaders this is only the tip of the iceberg. I myself experienced this discrimination after not being selected at Central High School when I was the top candidate by both staff and parent committees. With 14 years of experience (7 as a head principal and 7 as assistant and associate at Central High School), and being a nationally recognized principal by the Milken Outstanding Educator Network and National Association of Secondary School Principals, twice awarded at state and national levels and selected to be a principal of the year twice in Wyoming but was unable to represent our state due to being on the board of directors, I was looked past for a second year assistant principal that was female.

10. Focusing on reducing workload for the highest paid administration.

There has been increased growth of district level positions by 21 (9 central office and 12 additional central office SPED Teachers). Work at the building level becomes more and more intense with less and less support from the central office even with increased numbers of top-heavy educational systems. Senior leaders have hired more staff to make their lives easier with little to no support ever reaching the building level. Trickle Down Economic Theory has never worked and its failed approach in K-12 education is already present in our district.

Unethical Practices and vote of no confidence in the current leadership of LCSD 1

11. Arrogance and lack of connection to those they serve.

Dr. Crespo and Jim Fraley have demonstrated on multiple occasions that they stepped into these positions based on an infantile need for power and control over those around them. Centralizing their "why" solely around their position title in district level meetings as well as 7th grade classrooms in my building. Mr. Fraley told a class of 7th graders that "I have only one boss in this district. Do you know what that makes me? The Assistant Superintendent." Dr. Crespo has repetitively stated that she is the Superintendent and therefore she can do whatever she pleases with no repercussions. There are clear clinical concerns around these individuals needing more positive productive support in their homelives, not a position of district leadership charged with the care of over 17,000 children and adults in this system.

12. Lack of visibility, presence, and human connection.

Dr. Crespo has made appearances of less than 5 minutes of duration annually to JJHS. Followed up with one visit while I was transitioning to Wisconsin. Several administrators from the district office were needed to rotate through JJHS in my absence due to the inexperience of Ms. Bradshaw and her inability to manage and lead the school she was selected for. During these three visits Dr. Crespo offended the staff that chose to come to work with the most difficult population of students with the highest needs in the state outside of the reservation schools. Another letter has already been sent in from a science teacher citing these exact occurrences. On her first visit she chose to berate a student over a hat he was wearing to make a point to me about enforcing rules differently for students. The student in question then flipped her off and kept walking. I approached the student and apologized for the disrespect Crespo initiated by yelling at the student on his first day back in our building after being in drug treatment and recovery for 6 months prior. He then took his hat off and apologized to me and

went into class. Her blatant disregard for the needs of students based on her ego and hangups over the gender of the individual leading a school are apparent at every turn.

13. Cryptic meetings with no information being given and clear lack of leadership planning.

Leading from a position of fear and anxiety is a hallmark of Dr. Crespo. On several occasions I was called to meetings with no knowledge of why. When I arrived, she would frantically find another administrator or secretary to sit in and take notes on her behalf. In one meeting in particular the entire issue was over why a community member would approach her asking "Why is it that you don't like Brian Cox?" My reply was to the point "I do not have the time or energy to engage in whatever conversation/water cooler circles that you have. Some may be approaching you because they know the number of positions I have applied for as my references at both the district level and high school level and they have seen who you have hired and made their own conclusion that you must just not like me." Again, an example of childish hearsay rumors that pulled me away from the workload with at risk students to pander to her need to be in control. This meeting was set up over a week in advance where I was left to wonder if I had made a mistake, was in trouble, or ponder what issue was brewing. Another clear anxiety, fear and intimidation tactic used by the most fragile leaders in the literature base.

Further examples of her struggled leadership tactics can be seen in the lack of guidance to initiatives. Things like "innovative grants, athletic surveys, virtual snow days, etc" litter my experience with her leadership and that of Jim Fraley. Little to no planning or principal leadership voice was ever present. Bad ideas and poor planning were left to buildings to figure out, so students and families were not harmed in the process. She single handedly brought our legal advice in house (another female hire) and dismantled the Policy Advisory Committee to further limit the voice of our leaders and community members (who live in Cheyenne and have a vested interest in the success of our children). This allowed her to do whatever she wanted with board policy to go under the radar and manipulate a system to further make LCSD 1 like Thompson Valley and Boulder, CO. Many of us moved and live in WY for a reason. Unfortunately, because of Crespo and Fraley's repetitive harassment and intimidation of myself and family I am leaving to seek other opportunities and leaving many family members and friends behind in Cheyenne.

14. Lack of human connection with those she leads.

There is a clear disconnect between leadership and service for Dr. Crespo, Jim Fraley, Eric Jackson, and Vicki Thompson. To lead is to serve and thus why it is such a special endeavor. These leaders do not wish to serve they wish to be served. Whether due to psychological upbringing or factors throughout their lives these individuals have had a deep seeded imposter syndrome present where they have to be liked, cherished, and held on high. They themselves did not invest time and energy to build relationships with staff and students but stay as far away from decisions and conflict so that they could have plausible deniability. Continuing to distance themselves from the active fire in buildings further disconnected them from the issues and concerns. In Lincoln on Leadership, it was cited that Abraham Lincoln was such a successful leader because he was actively seen on the front lines during the civil war checking on his troops and seeing for himself the struggles. These individuals could greatly improve their outcomes if given some of the same advice and training. I would also offer that in building connections it is not by showing up to judge others. Based on their own buildings they ran many educators have shared with me the lack of this in their building level roles as well. I saw firsthand as an interning principal Mr. Fraley's lack of leadership and targeting of certain employees while I was at his building.

To attempt to check a box all principals were mandated to attend monthly counseling sessions with Sage Hobbs, a former Boulder School District employee and friend of Dr. Crespo. These sessions were directly reported back to the leadership and then used against administrators who were vulnerable and voiced advocacy efforts for their colleagues and teams. The sheer nepotism under Dr. Crespo's reign over LCSD 1 is only slightly referenced here and other examples can additionally be present in the household marriage of Mr. Thompson South HS principal and Vicki Thompson. This however has continued to be a blatant disregard for our policy and practice due to hiring another female friend to serve in this capacity.

Further examples of this lack of knowledge around their team can be seen in the horrific personal event of my family. My wife after having medical complications at CRMC after a tonsillectomy coded on the table and became unresponsive. As my wife was intubated and flown to Colorado not knowing if she would live, I went through the darkest days of my 44 years on this planet. After the issue was resolved not a single member of the district office except for Dr. Stephen Newton reached out to check on me. The trauma of seeing your spouse covered in blood and lying dying on a table cannot be shared in words that are meaningful and impactful enough to present the point that these people do not care about employees or the students we are charged to serve.

In closing...

As an educator of 21 years, I hold multiple degrees and certifications and only have my dissertation to complete for my Ed. D. I have been recognized as one of the top 1% of educators in the country by the Milken Foundation. I have been celebrated by the Governor of the State of Wyoming on multiple occasions for the programs and service we have implemented at JJHS. I have been chosen as the Assistant Principal of the Year for our state and recommended to serve on the National Association of Secondary School Principals Board of Directors as the Treasurer overseeing a 55-million-dollar annual budget. I have lobbied on behalf of our students and community in state and federal delegations in D.C. on eight occasions. I have served in local community organizations leading on the Boys and Girls club Board of directors as a board member and Vice President. I have dutifully served our community for 16 years as a classroom teacher, AP, and head principal, and unit leader for all administrators and supervisors.

I have set aside my own health and welfare to protect my students and families. I have been commended by the Cheyenne Police Department in a formal letter and awarded on two occasions for saving students' lives. Once when administering the Heimlich maneuver during a fight at the school during my first month on the job and secondly after coaching a student to relinquish a 12" butcher knife from their throat in a bathroom stall of the school. The later event resulting in my quarantine due to the student having COVID 19 and then being recalled from quarantine hours later to come back and manage Johnson JHS because the district office declared me essential personnel. So essential under previous administrations that I placed my own health and safety ahead of others while actively chasing gunmen from the campus of JJHS at after school events. Yet not essential enough to garner dignity and respect from Margaret Crespo, Jim Fraley, Eric Jackson, and Vicki Thompson.

It is truly sad that I left Cheyenne due to frail egos and poor leadership tactics. Fear of being shown up or looked at as less than those they serve clouded and obstructed the judgement of these leaders, pushing them to harass and intimidate numerous public servants of our community. I am not the only member of this district who has experienced this, but I have always been first and foremost an advocate for those that have no voice. Dr. James Whitehead was additionally out-counseled and

considered unqualified to lead as the Asst. SPED Director on three occasions in LCSD #1. He now serves one year out of our district as the Special Services Director of ESD 113 overseeing 47 districts and one tribal compact. This is my story of the previous 2 years (which felt like decades) and I share it now only to aid those I leave behind. Having been selected in a nationwide search to lead one of the top schools in the state of Wisconsin, I leave for an environment where respect and dignity are paramount. I leave for a district that believes employees are not cogs in the wheel that are easily replaced. They believe in leveling a pyramid of power and control away from the Superintendent and giving voice and authority to the community and its children we serve.

In the end I am first and foremost an advocate for students, staff, and the greater community which has afforded my family a home and service opportunity for 16 years. I am thankful for my time and the relationships I built in Cheyenne during my 16 years. I appreciate this board's willingness to listen and address these concerns so that others who I have left behind (teaching family as well as related family who attend and work in LCSD 1) will not be left without an advocate to turn to for behaviors and actions such as these. I urge this district to look within to rekindle the human connection. There are tried and true leaders such as Dr. Stephen Newton, Amanda Hall, and Matt Schlagel who can and should be in these positions of leadership. They focus on the children through more than just words. Their actions and work ethic demonstrate what the forementioned offenders only speak of in passing. I fear that mentioning their names will now make them the targets of Dr. Crespo but it is important that you as a board know who is working hard for kids and showing up and giving it their all every day. Should I be of any service to this community in the future please do not hesitate to reach out utilizing my information below.

Respectfully,

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