

Statement by Athens City Board of Education President Russell Johnson
October 22, 2020 Board Meeting

As you all know, in June, 2020, Dr. Holladay was placed on administrative leave. In the four months since that time, the school system has fully cooperated with a federal investigation, and, per the superintendent contract, has continued to pay Holladay's salary and related benefits. The investigation remains ongoing and confidential at the request of federal officials. The Board has not been informed of a date certain for the conclusion of the investigation. Dr. Holladay has almost 2 years remaining on his superintendent contract.

After a full review of the present situation and the uncertainties attendant with our circumstances, the board of education believes that it is both timely and appropriate to make a change in leadership and that such a change is in the best interest of Athens City Schools. With that in mind, the Board has agreed with Dr. Holladay to terminate Dr. Holladay's contract, so that his tenure as superintendent will conclude on October 31, 2020. The system has negotiated a full and final settlement payment of \$250,000 with Dr. Holladay. This settlement payment resolves and eliminates any further compensation and other expenses which we may have otherwise been obliged to pay related to this matter and provides us a financial savings and more certainty for our financial obligations under Dr. Holladay's employment contract. The Board believes that this settlement is in the best interest of the school system and the students we serve as it will allow us to move forward and focus on our school system's future. A separation agreement with Holladay has been approved by the Board.

In the weeks to come, the Board will begin the process and timeline for posting and selecting a new superintendent. I anticipate that we will have a new superintendent in place very soon.

The school system is in good financial shape, and we look forward to focusing on fully reopening our schools safely, rebuilding Athens Elementary, and planning for the future growth of this community.

In the meantime, Beth Patton remains the Acting Superintendent of Athens City Schools. This has been a difficult year for the school system filled with many different challenges, and the Board very much appreciates her leadership during this time.