

Sherry D. Coker
1471 Willie Coker Rd.
Turbeville SC 29162

February 19, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

As a citizen of Clarendon County School District 3, I want to express our dire need for funding. CSD3 currently ranks in the top 5 schools in the state for test scores and overall performance. We have been blanketed with awards and achievements. Yet we remain the 2nd lowest funded school district in the state. Ironically, in District 3, we are the 8th highest taxed school district in the state based on the millage rate. Compared to the other two districts in Clarendon County, we pay 3-4 times more property taxes in District 3 than citizens in Districts 1 and 2. Yet our school (per child) funding is up to 4 times lower. Assessed funding value per child in CDS3 is approximately \$7,000, in District 2 – \$18,000, and in District 1- \$39,000 per child per year.

Our students have been without art or music in school for over 5 years. These programs would be valuable and beneficial for our children. Numerous studies show that children exposed to art and music in schools both behave better in class and perform better on tests.

CSD3 has made numerous cuts to try and meet budget yearly while Districts 1 and 2 enjoy the finest of facilities, Ipads, marching band, art, music and drama programs while District 3 kids go without all of these. Despite these cuts and our under funding, we manage to outperform Districts 1 and 2 in test scores and overall performance. The staff and students of our district have been successful and should be rewarded for their efforts, not penalized.

Recently, our School Board proposed to change the language regarding the use of 1% sales tax. The current language allows for the excess money (after school debt has been paid down) to be used for land purchases, building construction and renovations. Clarendon School District 3 asked for the language to be changed slightly in order for the money to be used for operating expenses as well. We also asked for a larger portion of the money.

We hoped this extra money would aid us in operational costs (we have been using our reserves for operations costs) as well as school improvements; however, County Council (who has the sole power to change the language) as well as Districts 1 and 2 do not seem interested in giving us the ability to use the funds we so desperately need. Please intervene and help us find a solution to our situation here in Clarendon County School District 3. The students of School District 3 matter! We deserve equal funding for our School District! Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Sherry D. Coker

Resident of CSD3 and parent of a CSD3 student