



**For Immediate Release**  
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**ATLANTA— Statement from Verdaillia Turner, President, Georgia Federation of Teachers on the announcement of Lisa Herring as new Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools**

We have not had the opportunity to meet the board's candidate, Lisa Herring, but we welcome her to Atlanta, and we look forward to sincere and honest dialogue about the direction of our school system.

We were not surprised that the selection process, like other processes utilized by the current school board, involved minimal engagement with the public. It was a highly controlled and restrictive exercise in "democracy."

We must state our concern that this employer, the Atlanta Board of Education, is more a friend to the charter school industry than to the families and children of Atlanta.

But we look forward to a fresh start with Dr. Herring. We welcome dialogue about effective education based on tenets laid out by the bi-partisan National Conference of State Legislatures and the international Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Also at our disposal is the work of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) which brings to the table both education expertise, i.e. a focus on what actually works in the classroom, *and* the voices of educators themselves. Both organizations have a distinguished history of school improvement through labor-management collaboration.

We also note the powerful call of the NAACP for a moratorium of new charter schools. The NAACP has called for a strengthening of oversight in the governance and practice of charter schools. We urgently need this oversight in Atlanta. Our current Atlanta school board has never abandoned its zeal to off-load our public schools to charter school companies. Its most recent demonstration was the narrow passage of the "Excellent Schools" plan in March 2019. In the use of the benign word "excellent," we saw yet again a marketing strategy, not an actual vision for effective education. In reality, the plan simply continued the school board's delivery of public property and management contracts to private, for profit and "non-profit" companies.

As educators, we can never accept the turning of a profit as a description of effective education.

Now that some board members have accomplished their mission of handing over millions of tax dollars to profit-seeking charter school companies, we expect they will move on to other positions in the worlds of politics and business.

We call on our new superintendent to begin her relationship with the families and taxpayers of our city by paying careful attention to the troubling values and actions of our current school board. We reach out hopefully as dedicated and experienced educators in search of accountability and a new start.

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