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FEB 14 2015
7:18 a.m.
DES MOINES
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Des Moines, IA 50314
515-344-4442
nablake@yahoo.com

February 14, 2015

DMPS Board of Directors/Vacancy
ATTN: Debra Pendleton
901 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

To the Members of the Des Moines Public Schools Board of Directors:

I write to apply for the open position on the Des Moines School Board. I believe my passion for public service and my commitment to ensuring the best public education possible for Des Moines students make me the right candidate to serve the remainder of Touissant Cheatom's term representing the second district.

To briefly summarize my experience—which is covered more fully in my attached resume—I currently serve as an Assistant Iowa Attorney General in the area of Consumer Protection. Previously I worked at the United States Department of Agriculture helping oversee our national anti-hunger programs, including the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. I began my career practicing law at the Belin firm here in downtown Des Moines before joining Barack Obama's (ultimately successful) presidential campaign in 2007.

I am the son of two teachers: my dad teaches English and communications at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, where I grew up. My mom has spent her career teaching elementary school, including the last couple decades in the Lincoln Public Schools. I am a graduate of Union College, Yale Divinity School, and Yale Law School. My wife, Andrea, is a nurse practitioner in hospice care at HCI Care Services. We spend most of our free time chasing our daughter Campbell, son Judah, and golden retriever Eleanor Rigby.

I want to serve on the school board because excellent public education is quite possibly the most important function of government in a community. When my wife and I moved to Des Moines a decade ago, one of the aspects that attracted us was that people in Des Moines were justifiably proud of their public schools. Now that our daughter will be entering kindergarten next year, I am more invested than ever in ensuring DMPS is the model for urban education in the United States.

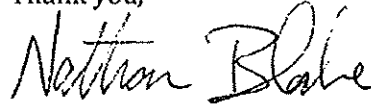
One of the continuing challenges in Des Moines—particularly notable in the second district—is the achievement gap for minority students. I've spent time reading with at-risk kids here in Des Moines and recently served on the board of Al Exito, a great organization that aims to provide able mentorship to Latino youth throughout Iowa. As a Latino myself, I understand the importance of diversity in leadership and the impact that can have throughout a system. We also need to be looking for ways to expand access to high-quality early childhood education; ensure

that our students can still benefit from curriculum that builds critical thinking skills and includes fine arts and physical education; and continue to modernize our approach to education so students are prepared to be productive, informed, kind, resilient, empathetic citizens in the twenty-first century.

I believe the Board could benefit from my background as an attorney and my experience at USDA as well as my active service on boards and in various contexts in our community. I understand the impact that policy changes can have on peoples' everyday lives. I also understand that doing this job well requires a serious time commitment: after my family and my day job, service on the School Board would be my top priority.

Ten years ago, I could have moved anywhere in the country. I chose to move to this community—in fact, to this district. I believe Des Moines is the best place in the country to live, work, and raise a family. Strengthening public education is one essential key to keeping it that way. Please consider my application to the School Board so I can put my skills to work in service to this community and the 32,000 students in the Des Moines Public Schools.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Blake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "N" and "B".

Nathan Blake

NATHAN BLAKE

711 16th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515.344.4442
nablake@yahoo.com

EXPERIENCE

- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**, Des Moines, Iowa **2011-present**
Assistant Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division • Investigate and prosecute violations of the Iowa Consumer Fraud Act, focusing on complex financial litigation, auto repair fraud, health care fraud, for-profit college recruiting practices, and privacy abuses.
- UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**, Washington, DC **2009-2011**
Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services • Staffed policy officials overseeing the nation's 15 nutrition assistance programs • Aided in policy formulation, legislative strategy, preparation for Congressional hearings, and outreach to media and stakeholders • Reviewed all rules, regulations, reports, memos, and correspondence for signature • Managed budget and emergency planning processes.
- OBAMA FOR AMERICA**, Iowa, California, Ohio, Mississippi, North Carolina **2007-2008**
Iowa Research Director • Headed state-based research, fact-checking, and vetting process • Led efforts to counter viral misinformation • Provided policy content for pioneering state-specific opposition website.
- Caucus/Primary Field Organizer* • Engaged and persuaded voters • Organized and planned events for Senator Obama and surrogates • Directed volunteers in get-out-the-vote campaigns in my region of each state.
- BELIN MCCORMICK, PC**, Des Moines, Iowa **2005-2007**
Associate • Represented clients in complex civil and criminal litigation: drafted briefs and motions; wrote memoranda detailing legal research; assisted in settlement negotiations, mediations, and trials.
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EDUCATION

- YALE LAW SCHOOL**, New Haven, Connecticut **June 2005**
Juris Doctor
- YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL**, New Haven, Connecticut **May 2005**
Master of Arts in Religion: *Ethics*
- UNION COLLEGE**, Lincoln, Nebraska **May 2001**
Bachelor of Arts: *International Studies*, summa cum laude
-

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- DES MOINES ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT** **2014-present**
- OAKRIDGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **2013-present**
- AL ÉXITO BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **2013-2014**
- SHERMAN HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BOARD** **2011-present**
- POLK COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE** **2006-2008, 2012-present**
- IOWA COMMISSION OF LATINO AFFAIRS** **2005-2008**

Pendleton, Debra

From: Nathan Blake <nablake@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2015 7:18 AM
To: Pendleton, Debra
Cc: Elsbernd, Cindy
Subject: DMPS Board of Directors Vacancy
Attachments: Blake Resume.pdf; Blake letter.pdf

Debra,

In application for the second district vacancy on the School Board, I have attached my Letter of Interest and Resume. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information from me.

Enjoy your weekend.

Nathan Blake
515.344.4442