

GUEST COLUMNISTS

Morris: Improving our schools requires a community effort

By [G. Scott Morris](#), Special to The Daily Memphian

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What a mess our school system is in.

Whether or not to fire Memphis-Shelby County Schools Superintendent Marie Feagins has sparked passionate opinions and heated discussions, but the larger question we must confront is not about one individual but about how we, as a community, can come together to improve our schools for the benefit of every child in Memphis.

Let's start with the bare honest facts.

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY MEMPHIAN

G. Scott Morris



The Rev. Dr. G. Scott Morris, M.D., is founder of Church Health. He is a regular contributor to The Daily Memphian.

[Calkins: Five board members want to oust Feagins. They're making her a martyr instead.](#)

Nearly 25% of our citizens live below the poverty level. For a family of four that is \$31,200 a year. Many of our students face barriers that go far beyond the classroom—food insecurity, unstable housing and limited access to healthcare.

These realities weigh heavily on our public education system, which is tasked not only with teaching math and reading but also with serving as a safety net for thousands of lives.

The stakes are high, and emotions are raw. Still, as we discuss the future of Feagins, let us remember that this decision, while important, is only part of a much larger conversation.

Whether she stays or goes, the deeper issue remains: how do we transform our schools into places where every child, regardless of zip code, has the opportunity to thrive?

To do that, we must focus on the root problems.

Memphis schools face overcrowded classrooms, underpaid teachers, outdated facilities and a persistent achievement gap. These are systemic issues that require systemic solutions.

Pointing fingers or letting divisiveness take the lead will not solve these problems. What will solve them is a collective commitment to reform, innovation and accountability.

We also need to support the educators and staff who are in the trenches every day, often working with limited resources.

Teachers can't do it alone. They need smaller class sizes, professional development opportunities, and fair compensation.

Feagins and MSCS: Superintendent calls charges false, divisive

Our students deserve well maintained buildings, modern technology, and after-school programs that spark their curiosity and creativity.

Most of all, we need unity.

Memphis can't afford to be a city defined by meanness, factionalism, or personal vendettas. I have never met Feagins, but if she isn't the right person for the job, then let's make that decision with integrity and with the best interests of our children at heart.

And let's also acknowledge that one leader can't solve every problem. This is a community issue that requires a community response.

Parents, teachers, school board members, faith leaders, business owners and students themselves all have a role to play.

We must hold our leaders accountable while also offering them support.

If you don't have children in our school system, talk to friends who do, or talk to a teacher to get versed on this subject.

An attitude of 'let's just throw them out' will not get us where we need to go. We must advocate for policies that prioritize equality and excellence in education.

And we must approach these challenges not with cynicism but with hope — because our children deserve nothing less.

Play by play: What was said during MSCS' superintendent evaluation committee

Let us not forget what's at stake. The success of Memphis depends on the success of our schools.

Every child who graduates ready for college, a career, or community service represents a step forward for our city.

Every teacher who feels supported and inspired represents a light for future generations.

Every family that sees their child thrive represents a victory for us all.

So as the debate over the superintendent unfolds, let us keep our focus where it belongs, on the children of Memphis. They are our greatest responsibility and our greatest hope.

Let us choose to build, not tear down.

Let us choose collaboration over conflict.

And let us remember that the future of Memphis is being shaped not in boardrooms but in classrooms, one student at a time.

TOPICS

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