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March 5, 2026

WILLIAM KANG
Member
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VIA EMAIL [JNELSON@RCFP.ORG]

Jennifer Nelson
Director of Pre-Publication Review
& Journalist Support
REPORTERS COMMITTEE
FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS
1156 15th St. NW, Suite 1020,
Washington DC 20005

Re: The Croton Chronicle

Dear Ms. Nelson:

Keane & Beane, P.C. is General Counsel to the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District (“District”). The Superintendent of Schools, Stephen Walker (“Superintendent Walker”), has forwarded your letter to him, dated February 25, 2026, for our review. We offer the following response on behalf of the District.

Initially, the District denies that it has excluded Michael Balter (“Mr. Balter”) or the Croton Chronicle from any media distribution list. Contrary to your or Mr. Balter’s assertions, the District does not maintain a “media distribution list” or a “press list”. Unlike other municipalities, the District does not hold press conferences or issue press releases to media outlets on a press list. Rather, communications with the public, or what you might consider “press releases,” are typically posted on the District’s website, its social media accounts, or issued directly to parents through email lists or parental notification applications. While there are occasions where the District may provide a statement or information to a local media outlet when it wishes to publicize a particular event or statement, there is no “media distribution list” for doing so, nor is there any formalized practice or procedure as to which media outlet(s) are provided the information (with the exception of hearing and election notices that are mandated to be publicized in a specific manner under the Education Law). Accordingly, there is no media distribution list from which to exclude, or on which to place, Mr. Balter. Notwithstanding the foregoing, as a courtesy, should the

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District issue a statement/release to multiple media outlets for circulation to the general public in the future, it will also provide such statement/release to Mr. Balter.

Finally, the District denies your and Mr. Balter's claims that the District's actions raise First Amendment concerns, are inconsistent with its Media Relations policy, or are retaliatory in any way. As stated above, Mr. Balter has not been excluded from any "media distribution list" nor has he been denied any information available to the public. As you acknowledge, the District is under no obligation to respond to requests for comment, whether from Mr. Balter or any member of the press. Moreover, we note that Mr. Balter has not been excluded from attending, or participating in, any meetings of the Board of Education and has been provided with thousands of pages of records in response to his numerous Freedom of Information Law requests. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that the District has provided Mr. Balter with more information than any other member of the media/press. As such, respectfully, your and Mr. Balter's claims are without merit.

We trust the above addresses your concerns. Please direct any future correspondence regarding this matter to my attention.

Very truly yours,

William Kang

William Kang

WK/

cc: Ana Teague, Board President
Stephen Walker, Superintendent of Schools