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Dear South Bend Community School Corporation Board Members,

I am calling for further investigation into the allegations of widespread inflation and fraudulent changing of grades of our recent graduating seniors without the sufficient completion of the coursework through the online application Edmentum Courseware (previously known as Plato). This online application, is primarily used to educate students in online classes and complete coursework online without being inside the classroom. However, currently, there are students who are not showing up to class most of the year, then at the end of the year enrolling in the Edmentum Courseware version of the class and finishing 9 months of schoolwork in mere days or hours and receiving a passing grade to be able to graduate at the end of the year. This is all being done to ultimately boost Superintendent Cummings' payment, since his contract was extended because of increased graduation rates.

On July 31, 2023, Joseph Beachey, a teacher at SBCSC High School Rise Up Academy announced his resignation at the monthly SBCSC board meeting over the improper fraudulent issuance of credits and improper inflation of grades being used to pass and graduate students who have fundamentally not completed the necessary coursework using the Edmentum Courseware. Here is a link to the video of Mr. Beachey's testimony.  
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dskhebv23sfl8929duoi/SBCSC-School-Board-Video-Teacher-Whistleblower-1-07-31-23-2.MP4?rlkey=0iw6ktj0on7lebqmbv5h5z0k&dl=0>

Corroborating Mr. Beachey's story, numerous teachers and school counselors employed by SBCSC at different schools have discussed this same issue to me directly and would like to come forward with information documenting the grade inflation. However, these teachers are too afraid to do so in fear of retaliation by SBCSC leadership against their jobs. To simplify this scandal, the following is an explanation of how these fraudulent credits are applied and issued using the On-line application Edmentum Courseware.

Currently, a student can choose to enroll in an Edmentum Courseware class **AT ANY TIME**, even until just before the end of the school year. Once a student enrolls in an Edmentum Courseware class, a teacher must be assigned to oversee the coursework as the "teacher of record." No notification is required to be given to the teacher of record in an Edmentum Courseware class. Currently, there are SBCSC teachers' names being applied to students' transcript credits who never had the student in class, nor issued the grades/credits, nor oversaw the work they allegedly completed in Edmentum. These grades are being changed and teachers' names being entered by SBCSC administrators **WITHOUT** the completion of the required coursework by the student, or notifying the original teacher who is listed as being responsible for teaching the student. There are teachers currently in SBCSC who are being listed as being the teacher of record for classes in Edmentum that haven't taught the requisite course for years. For example, a Chemistry teacher being listed for an Edmentum Earth Sciences class despite not having been taught the Edmentum-listed class in years.

Once the student "completes" the coursework in Edmentum online, the student's Edmentum Courseware grade is then entered into PowerSchool. PowerSchool is the online student grade reporting system. Report cards are placed in PowerSchool, credits are listed in PowerSchool, and PowerSchool where all grades are held for parents to review. PowerSchool

also contains absences and discipline records as well. In line with current state education policies, the parent is allowed to get all absences waived for a SBCSC student's entire academic career without a reason for the absence. Combining this absence waiver policy with the Edmentum grade inflation, absences are simultaneously being waived from class and coursework is being completed in five minutes that would take a normal student 9 months and every day in class to complete.

I have personally spoken to one 2022-23 school year senior student and recent SBCSC graduate who received an "F" in Integrated Chemistry for never coming to class. Towards the end of the school year, this student subsequently enrolled in Edmentum Courseware version of the class and gained a grade of "A-" using the Edmentum application. This student told me that he does not even know how to **spell the word** "integrated" and does not even know what the word means, yet he received an "A-" in the class.

In most cases, we have been told that the building principal of the schools where grades are being inflated submitted the respective principal's name as the "teacher of record" and entered the Edmentum grade directly to PowerSchool. Without a direct review of each and every student's performance record on Edmentum, an investigator will never connect the student's inflated grade with what actually occurred in Edmentum, as PowerSchool does not list the teacher of record.

I reported these problems to the State Department of Education on July 31, 2023. Not four days later, on August 3, 2023 a memo was sent out by Rafi Nolan-Abraham attempting to backtrack and correct the errors that were widespread throughout the district. This memo is evidence of the wrongdoing by SBCSC administrators regarding Edmentum credits. But underlying all of this, there is a nefarious purpose for the fraudulent entry of unearned grades. These unearned senior credits have inflated the recent graduation rates of all of the SBCSC High Schools, and support the Superintendent's recent evaluation and the recent extension of the Superintendent's contract which was voted on and passed on Monday, August 22, 2023 by the SBCSC School Board. The graduation rate was part of Superintendent Cummings' evaluation by the SBCSC board, and is what allowed him to get a contract extension. But with students being passed through the system deliberately without actually learning is destroying the very reason for South Bend Schools in the first place: To educate and uplift the children in our community. Ultimately, it is the students who being hurt the most by receiving these fraudulent credits and unearned graduation diplomas.

I am requesting an immediate investigation regarding these allegations of improper grade inflation and grade fabrication through Edmentum Courseware. Failure to investigate these allegations will make the members of the SBCSC Board complicit with the academic deceit and deception being promulgated by Superintendent Cummings.

Thank you,

Robert F. Smith

Former Assistant Principal  
Clay High School

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**Attorney General, Todd Rokita:**

**Thank you for your dedication to address and rectify the challenges facing public education. I am very appreciative of your efforts and support.**

I am a retired school administrator and educator (48 years); As an individual (retired) who has dedicated his career to our students, their effective educational pathways and employment futures, I am extremely disappointed at the seemingly under interests at the State level and the lack of urgency, in the documented information, regarding the widespread "inflation" of the credits of our recent graduating seniors without the sufficient completion of the coursework through the On-Line application Edmentum Courseware (previously known as Plato).

In addition, Rise-Up Academy/SBCSC has reaped the benefit of the fraudulent credits and the resultant increase in graduation rate denoted through (one component) of a Federal Grant recently issued (3 million dollars) to pursue academic/credit increases for students using the Plato/Edmentum On-Line tool. These processes of using Plato/Edmentum to issue fraudulent credits are demonstrated in every SBCSC high school.

I have attempted to obtain numerous responses for an investigation since August 02, 2023; I have not been contacted by any investigator concerning the above.

I have investigated and communicated the following information and attempted to obtain numerous responses for an investigation since August 02, 2023, to the following individuals:

- (1) The Department of Education/State of Indiana (intake personnel/Molly)
- (2) State Senator Linda Rogers
- (3) Cassie Tripp/Senator Roger's legislative assistant
- (4) Chad Ranney/DOE General Counsel
- (5) Katie Jenner/DOE Administration
- (6) Katie Beth Muller/DOE/Administrative Assistant
- (7) [legal@doe.in.gov](mailto:legal@doe.in.gov)
- (8) Amy Drake
- (9) South Bend Community School Board
- (10) SBCSC Superintendent Cummings
- (11) Corrine Youngs/Policy Director/Legislative Counsel, Office Of AG

This information has "haunted" me over the last several months as more and more students have received diplomas that lead to futures of intangible employment pursuits and career paths;

defaulting to growing criminal activities and unfortunately to increases in death (shootings) in the streets. Thus, the students who are receiving these fraudulent credits and graduation diplomas are the ones who are academically challenged for their future career interests.

A snapshot view of how these fraudulent credits is applied using the On-line application Edmentum Courseware (previously known as Plato) is contained in the enclosed letter sent to the SBCSC School Board (12-11-23 at 9:29am).

I strongly believe that we are in the business of education and not deception to achieve professional/personal goals. Failure to pursue the "best in educating our students," leads those individuals into a realm that lacks integrity, fairness and professional ethics. Please contact me.....I respectfully "beg you" to continue to stand on your duty and service to the education of our students.

I have seen the "proof" of the allegations and simply ask for an investigation.  
Would you please contact me via tele asap (574-229-8166) or (email: [smitty0314@comcast.net](mailto:smitty0314@comcast.net))

Please advise,  
Thank you,  
Robert F. Smith