



October 21, 2015

Dear Teachers and Families:

A lot has happened since our last letter describing our efforts to save Baltimore's public charter schools. More than 1,000 of us rallied at Lake Montebello. We testified twice at the Board of Commissioners' meetings and again at a Baltimore City Council hearing. And thankfully, City Schools CEO Gregory Thornton withdrew a devastating charter school funding formula – under pressure from Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and following a unanimous City Council vote in support of our schools.

Yet, our work is far from done.

As you know, at the request of Mayor Rawlings-Blake, University of Baltimore President Kurt Schmoke agreed to facilitate a conversation with the school system to find a permanent, legal solution to charter funding in Baltimore.

Last week, the now 15 schools involved in the lawsuit made a compromise proposal to former Mayor Schmoke and the school system:

- We agreed to stay (pause for 60 days) our lawsuits to allow time for discussion;
- We supported a strong public component in these discussions to ensure parents and educators had a place in the room;
- And we insisted that the school system open its books and provide detailed and accurate documentation on its spending of public education dollars. These are public documents that should be available.

Unfortunately, as you may have read in today's paper, Dr. Thornton refused to open the system's books and, instead, demanded that our charter schools drop the lawsuits – with a promise never to sue again, regardless of the system's actions.

In an effort to keep talks on track, Mayor Schmoke made a final proposal that included our offer to pause the lawsuits for 60 days, created an open process, and again included the system's agreement to open its books. However, the school system refused this offer as well. Mayor Schmoke then withdrew from the process.

As a result of the school system's actions, we have no choice but to stand up for our families and children. We are moving forward with litigation to compel the school system to open its books and, hopefully, determine a stable, equitable and legal charter funding formula going forward. The law is clearly on our side. Our group has now grown from nine schools to 15 schools in the past few weeks and more schools will join.

Finally, we also wanted to make you aware of a more immediate threat to our school. According to the school system, it is planning to approve a new charter funding formula by December 1. The details have not yet been revealed, but we need to guard against going back toward the devastating plan Dr. Thornton presented in September.

All of us are interested in reaching a resolution as quickly as possible, and we are determined to stand up for our children and families. We will continue to keep you informed as this process moves forward. And with your help, we will continue to work to improve the Baltimore City Public School System – for all public school students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will McKenna".

Will McKenna, Founder/Executive Director  
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