

Bishop Gregory Cook, Sr.
Rev. LaVelle A. Cook

Dear State Board of Education,

As a parent of a Paulo Freire Charter School student, I am very concerned about the closing of the school. My daughter, Gianna, is an honor student and involved in the student government of the school. She has continued to thrive at the school during her two years here. The Commissioner's decision to close the school, and her delivery of this decision to us via the media, failed to take into account socio-emotional needs of our school community. This egregious practice is only surpassed by the State Department of Education's attempt to balance the educational budget deficits of the Newark Public Schools at the expense of our children's education.

The students at Paulo Freire have exceeded the PSAT/SAT, graduation rate and 4 year college acceptance rate of all Newark comprehensive public schools.(statistics verifiable online) The administrative practice of punishing students by closing a school that exceeds the standards of other schools is unjust and immoral. It further delineates an inept administrative culture that undermines the potential for greater student success in the city of Newark. How in 2017 do you close a school that exceeds expectations and keep open other lower functioning schools. This type of management will slowly erode the progress of all students in the Newark public system. It also exposes an administratively political culture that does what is convenient as opposed to what is just.

The procedures for allowing students from the Paulo Freire Charter School to obtain a seat in another Newark high school was less than fair. The open window for applying to another school for acceptance for fall 2017 was closed before the students were allowed to apply. Which means that all of the requests from Paulo Freire students to attend alternative highs schools were considered late and subsequently granted with little to no thought for the individual talents & need of the student. What provisions have been made if any to accommodate students whose accepted school is unacceptable for a myriad of circumstances?

If all high schools in Newark, or any urban city, were capable of educating its students to their fullest potential, no matter where they attended, then this disruptive political and managerial nightmare would be of no consequence. However, Paulo Freire Charter School currently outperforms the majority of the schools that are district or charter remaining in the city. This means that our children will most likely be placed in schools that are not performing as well at the Paulo Freire Charter School. Given the Commissioner's decision to close our

school, she has a responsibility to our children to ensure that they are placed in a school that is performing. However, she has stepped away from, and shrugged, this responsibility. How does someone close a school that the data supports is out-performing most schools in the city, but then not take the responsibility to ensure that its students are not placed in these remaining failing schools? If this ownership is not going to be taken by the state, then our school should be allowed to remain open!

It is evident that the State's attitude towards this problem has reached an immeasurable level of apathy and swept our children's educational progress under the carpet, ignoring the obvious casualty's, the optimal educational progress of the students of Paulo Freire Charter School.

Respectfully submitted,

Bishop Gregory Cook Sr.

Rev. LaVelle A. Cook