

February 14, 2018

School Reform Commission
440 N. Broad Street
Suite 101
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Honorable Members of the School Reform Commission,

On behalf of more than 60 Philadelphia Charter Schools, we want to express our opposition to the amended Policy 406, the Charter Amendment Policy. We seek reasonable and fair charter renewal agreements and amendment policies that reflect the best practices of charter school authorizing. We are requesting that you, the SRC:

1. Table Policy 406 and form a working group to collaborate with the charter community to draft a reasonable and updated amendment policy.
2. Instruct the Charter Schools Office to negotiate fair charter renewal agreements for the 17 schools currently operating without agreements by March 1, 2018.

There is no urgent need to pass Policy 406. The District has a current policy in place that is adequate. Since there has been some confusion, we want to clarify that no court has mandated that the District must revise its charter amendment policy.

As the District transitions to local control, this is a time for us to be united, not divided – both in Philadelphia and in Harrisburg. Pushing forward with a controversial new amendment policy will only serve to drive a greater wedge between the Charter Schools and the Charter School Office, and set up a lengthy and contentious policy (and likely legal battle) that will last beyond the SRC's existence.

Since the issue appeared before the SRC's Policy Committee we have repeatedly expressed a willingness to work hand-in-hand to develop a new charter amendment process. Yet Policy 406 is not reflective of the input, stakeholder testimony, feedback, or suggested changes that we have offered. On December 7, 2017, over 40 Charter Schools were represented at the Policy Committee meeting, and we were encouraged that the policy was tabled for greater discussion and collaboration. Unfortunately, that opportunity to collaborate never materialized. We were disappointed when our request for a meeting was denied, and frustrated that we received no response from the SRC on the sample language we provided.

There is no disagreement that having a charter amendment policy is good for the District and for the Charter community. Yet this policy, created hastily with no stakeholder input, usurps charter school independence and innovation, violates PA's Charter School Law and adds additional bureaucracy to charter school oversight. If enacted, Policy 406 will restrict our ability to properly and adequately serve our students.

Charter Schools serve and educate over 70,000 public school students in Philadelphia. The District's recently released School Progress Reports (SPR) show that Philadelphia Charter Schools are outperforming School District of Philadelphia (SDP)-managed schools on each metric:

- Average **Overall** score **43.8** for Charters; 33.6 for SDP
- Average **Achievement** Score **18.8** for Charters; 18 for SDP
- Average **Progress** score **52.7** for Charters; 42 for SDP
- Average **Climate** score **58.9** for Charters; 39.9 for SDP

Today we are asking the SRC to table Policy 406 until issues surrounding charter renewal agreements are resolved and a working group can be formed to work collaboratively on an updated charter amendment policy.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and know that we stand ready to work together.

Signed,

Ad Prima Charter School
Antonia Pantoja Community Charter School
Belmont Charter School
Boys Latin of Philadelphia Charter School
Charter High School for Architecture and Design
Community Academy of Philadelphia Charter School
Eastern Universtiy Academy Charter School
Esperanza Academy Charter School
Eugenio Maria De Hostos Charter School
Folk Arts-Cultural Treasure Charter School
Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School
Franklin Towne Charter High School
Frederick Douglass Mastery Charter School
Freire Charter School
Global Leadership Academy Charter School
Global Leadership Academy Charter School Southwest at Huey
Inquiry Charter School
John B Stetson Charter School
Keystone Academy Charter School
KIPP DuBois Charter School
KIPP Philadelphia Charter School
KIPP West Philadelphia Charter School
KIPP West Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School
Lindley Academy Charter School at Birney

Mariana Bracetti Academy Charter School
MaST Community Charter School
MaST Community Charter School II
Mastery Charter High School Lenfest Campus
Mastery Charter School Cleveland Elementary
Mastery Charter School Francis D. Pastorius Elementary
Mastery Charter School Hardy Williams
Mastery Charter School John Wister Elementary
Mastery Charter School Clymer Elementary
Mastery Charter School Gratz Campus
Mastery Charter School Harrity Campus
Mastery Charter School Mann Campus
Mastery Charter School Pickett Campus
Mastery Charter School Shoemaker Campus
Mastery Charter School Smedley Campus
Mastery Charter School Thomas Campus
Math Civics and Sciences Charter School
Memphis Street Academy Charter School
Multicultural Academy Charter School
New Foundations Charter School
Northwood Academy Charter School
Olney Charter High School
Pan American Academy Charter School

Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter
Schools
Philadelphia Academy Charter School
Philadelphia Montessori Charter School
Richard Allen Preparatory Charter School
Russell Byers Charter School
Tacony Academy Charter School
TECH Freire Charter School
Universal Alcorn Charter School
Universal Audendried Charter School

Universal Bluford Charter School
Universal Creighton Charter School
Universal Daroff Charter School
Universal Institute Charter School
Universal Vare Charter School
West Oak Lane Charter School
West Philadelphia Achievement Charter
Elementary School
Wissahickon Charter School
Young Scholars Charter School

CC:

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Mayor Jim Kenney
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