

OPEN LETTER TO DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT CLIFFORD JANEY  
FROM THE SAVE OUR SCHOOLS COALITION and PUBLIC SCHOOL  
ADVOCATES

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September 5, 2006

Dear Dr. Janey,

The Save Our Schools Coalition and other public school advocates support your bold and timely call for a city-wide moratorium on new charter schools, and we urge you to strengthen the moratorium to include expansion campuses of existing charters as well.

You are absolutely right that charter schools in DC have failed, overall, to deliver quality. Although the Washington Post editorial board, predictably, did not stand with you in supporting the moratorium, their reporters, most notably in a front-page story on August 22, got it right when they stated that charter schools were "imposed" on DC by Congress and that their proliferation is draining resources, money, and enrollment from our traditional neighborhood public schools. Because of DC's lack of democratic representation, Congress has made us a laboratory in an educational experiment that is not yielding the positive results its proponents had hoped for.

The failure of charter schools and the danger they pose to our children's right to a quality public education has been recognized by the New York Times as well: on May 10, its lead editorial urged local and national officials to "rein in charters," and on August 27, in another lead editorial, the Times "explod[ed] the myth of charter schools," noting that charter schools that operate outside of school systems (as is the case with all of the DC charters established through the Public Charter School Board) are the most egregious in their failure to monitor teacher quality and improve student achievement.

You have called this new school year a time of "reclamation" for DCPS, and a moratorium on new and expansion charter schools is a necessary first step. The parents, students, teachers, trade unionists and community activists of the Save Our Schools Coalition and other public school advocates stand with you and those elected officials brave enough to work toward the critical goal of rebuilding an excellent, truly public school system.

Respectfully yours,

The Save Our Schools Coalition

Parents United for the DC Public Schools

Youth Education Alliance (YEA)

Project South

Coolidge Senior High School PTSA

Clifford Lowery, President AFGE1975; President, Ballou Senior High School PTSA

Emily Y. Washington, President, National Council of Black Educators of Reading and Language  
Terry Goings, DCPS Parent  
Elizabeth Davis, DCPS Teacher  
Winston Miller, Ward 7 voter and DCPS Teacher  
Sally Schwartz, Ward 4 voter  
LeRoy Hall, Ward 5 voter  
Sandra Lauffer  
Marcio Duffles  
Celia Peterson, DCPS Parent  
Mary Skerritt-Vankevich, Ward 7  
Laura Pierce  
Suzanne Wells, DCPS Parent  
Barbara D'Emilio, Ward 4  
Tim D'Emilio, Ward 4  
Benita Nicholson, DCPS Teacher  
Kaire Nicholson  
Kenyett Nicholson  
Catherine Jones  
Lucy Summers  
Timothy Walker  
Ida Edwards  
Sherry Trafford, DCPS Parent  
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Fran Ewert, DCPS Teacher  
Shad Ewert, DCPS Parent  
Margaret McGowen, DCPS Parent  
Rebecca Burke, DCPS Parent  
Katherine Coyle, DCPS Parent  
Ted Coyle, DCPS Parent  
Susan Bloom, DCPS Parent  
Gail Sonnemann, DCPS Parent  
Diana Hibbs, DCPS Parent  
Andrea Rosen, Ward 3 voter and DCPS Parent  
Tina DeAnna, DCPS Teacher and Parent  
Gene DeAnna, DCPS Teacher and Parent  
Mindy Mitchell, Member of Friends of Kingman Park  
Randy Herrick-Stare  
Pamella Shaw, DCPS Teacher  
Robert Shaw, DCPS  
Sam Brylawski, DCPS Parent  
Leonard Jeweler  
Ed Dixon, DCPS Parent and Teacher  
Ruth Shinn  
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