



HIGHLINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

575 Andover Park West • Suite 205 • Tukwila, WA 98188 • 206-246-4340 • highlineea.org

February 1, 2016

Honorable Highline School Board:

First, the Highline Education Association Executive Board of Directors would like to express our appreciation to the Highline School Board members for taking into consideration the views expressed by community members at the January 20, 2016 school board meeting regarding the proposal submitted by the Mary Walker School District. We also recognize that Mr. Bernie Dorsey and Mr. Tyrone Curry went above and beyond by holding a lengthy listening session on January 23 that allowed issues and concerns to be explored further.

On January 27, the HEA Executive Board held an extensive discussion regarding your upcoming vote. To that end, we are asking you to consider the oath of office you took to uphold the Washington State Constitution. The State Supreme Court has found the charter law to be unconstitutional and, thus, illegal. Being bound by your oath to follow the Washington State constitution necessarily requires that you vote the Mary Walker ALE proposal down.

However, if you as a board are determined to seriously consider their proposal, we are compelled to respectfully ask the following of you as the legal and fiduciary representatives of the Highline School District:

- 1) Please review the recordings of public comments shared near the beginning and at the end of the most recent school board meeting to listen to community concerns if you were not able to attend the school board meeting. Please note that all speakers at the meeting spoke against approving the MWSD ALE request.
- 2) Please clarify with HPS legal counsel why an agreement between Highline School District and Mary Walker School is necessary. Public records document that Rainier Prep has already entered into an ALE agreement with the Mary Walker School District. Public Records document an increased enrollment of 650 students at Mary Walker School District for December 2015 and January 2016. Why is an additional agreement needed?
- 3) Please ask HPS staff to gather all materials generated from the Seattle School Board, Tacoma SB review of the Mary Walker SD proposal. With their larger support system, you might find issues and implications that their analysis uncovered that our district has not and, thus, led to their decision not to accept the proposal. Why would SPS and Tacoma SD legal counsel advise against approving such an agreement? SPS stated, "We do not intend to subvert legal processes to find ways to fund charter schools that have been ruled unconstitutional."
- 4) Upon reviewing the WA state definition of Alternative Learning Experiences, please explain how Rainier Prep qualifies as an ALE. One of many ALE requirements is that each student must have a written individual student learning plan. Student Learning Plans are absent from the RP website. Will HPS be responsible for this oversight?

5) If you have not already, please ask HPS staff to procure the Rainier Prep's budget and financial statements for the first half of the year along with minutes from all their board meetings. The students attending Rainier Prep are counting on your judgement of their financial standing. Rainier Prep is identified as a public school. None of the school board minutes have any budget information in relation to the operations of the school. There is a statement regarding public funds in the October Rainier Prep board meeting. It states that when RP receives public reimbursement funds, those funds are moved into private accounts and considered private funds.

6) Currently, Beverly Park has 400+ students and, with adjustments, please consider that five classrooms could be made available to house classes from Rainier Prep. Rainier Prep has six classrooms of students, although some are out of district transfers. HPS has the classrooms to absorb Highline students in our existing schools.

7) It is also imperative that you determine, in writing, whether Rainier Prep is able to ensure all of the provisions of IDEA for every student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or any student who may need to be evaluated as eligible for special education services. The current ALE agreement between Rainier Prep and MWSD states that RP is responsible for all services and accommodations under IDEA. Currently, information on the Rainier Prep website states that there is special education programming, including identifying students. There is not a psychologist on staff, therefore, is HPS responsible for the evaluation process when needed? Additionally, if students need any other educational support services (speech-language, physical/occupational therapy) is it the responsibility of HPS to oversee and/or provide these services and ensure the legal mandate?

8) If you feel compelled to continue moving forward, at least extend the deadline to gather critical information and public input to inform your decision.

Publicly elected school boards are charged with upholding our state's constitution. Being bound by your oath to follow the Washington State constitution necessarily requires that you vote the Mary Walker ALE proposal down.

Respectfully,



Highline Education Association

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