



Detroit Public Schools
Office of the Emergency Financial Manager
Robert C. Bobb

April 9, 2009

Dear Detroit Public Schools Parent:

Where we send our children to school is an important decision for parents and guardians. I am very sensitive to how school closures and transfers to new schools affect these important personal decisions. Today we enter an important phase of a lengthy process, one which began months before I arrived in Detroit, to bring forward a list of candidate schools for closure and/or consolidation as part of a Realignment Plan for the 2009-2010 School Year. I have made this list public, made certain that it is available at all of our district schools and on the district web site, and am in the process of creating additional opportunities for parents and community members to have their voice in this process.

To right size this district so that available resources may be maximized for the 95,000+ current Detroit Public Schools students, schools will have to be closed, positions will be impacted, and programs carefully reviewed. Through these difficult and challenging decisions, I remain very aware of how this process affects our children, families and community. I strongly believe that we have the professional staff in place to ensure that students are placed in the optimal educational environment, where safety and security is at the forefront both on campus and in the community, where building conditions serve the needs of the students, and where the community takes active involvement. We will launch a "summer rush" of facilities improvements at all of the schools receiving new students to ensure that those academic environments are prepared for students. We will work extremely hard to meet the goal of having all of the work completed before children come to school this fall.

We will also ensure that decommissioned properties do not become a blight on our neighborhoods. My vision for the Detroit Public Schools includes a future where our properties and facilities assets not only serve our children well, but serve to positively drive growth, progress, development and expansion of the city's resident, family and tax base. We all know far too well that the end result, if not carefully thought out and carefully planned out, can do just the opposite by becoming a negative drain on communities. We will work closely with community-based organizations in neighborhoods both where schools are closing and where schools are receiving students.

Most importantly, I wanted to share with you that academics and programs at these schools have played paramount importance in the current decision-making process. All aspects of schools' present and prior levels of student achievement have been taken into account, as have community partnerships and supporting programs. Where excellent academic performance is taking place at a candidate school, this year's process ensures that the impacted students have only equal or superior options. This is not about "winners" and "losers." It is about strong academic environments, safety and security both at school and in the community, and parent and community involvement.

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The detailed Facilities Realignment data is available at every DPS school and on the DPS website, www.detroitk12.org . I welcome your requests for town hall meetings and additional forums at which we can present information on these plans and to receive your feedback. I have established a hotline, this one for parents and guardians of DPS students only, to provide input as well. You can call 313-870-3749 or email facilitieshotline@detroitk12.org . Final decisions on the school realignments will be made by May 8, 2009.

I encourage all parents to take another look at DPS. I am very excited about our future. Detroit Public Schools will become “first choice” schools for all parents and families. Our improved finances must support gains in student achievement. We must bridge both the preparation and achievement gaps and improve customer service. We will redouble efforts to get our message out regarding outstanding programs, teachers and students. We know that there are great things happening in this school district and that there are children in DPS performing at remarkably high levels.

I look forward to engaging you on this and all processes as we develop a master education plan for 21st century teaching and learning, work to provide safe and secure learning environments, and create long term facilities and financial plans to support these. Immediate actions being taken will help lead us into a multi-year plan of reconstruction for excellence.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Bobb
Emergency Financial Manager