

CITIZENS for PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CPS

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Dear Governor Patrick,

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We urge you to immediately use all the powers of your office (including statutory and positional persuasion) to bring about the immediate rescission of the "charter" granted under indefensible circumstances in Gloucester.

The recently enacted Achievement Gap legislation includes a lifting of the caps on the number of charter schools in underperforming districts. If there can be any hope for a positive outcome for this legislation, the families of those districts must have trust in the decisions of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The time to build that trust is now. Lifting the shadow that surrounds the Gloucester Charter School would be a significant first step.

The litany of errors in judgment regarding this charter school needs to be assessed now and decisions made to protect the communities of the Commonwealth from such errors in the future.

Inspector General Gregory Sullivan stated very explicitly at the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on January 26, 2010, that this school was never properly chartered and should be voided. He said that the Department's own regulations require that the charter school MUST meet the criteria set up by the DESE and, clearly, this one did not. Beyond that, the lack of openness about this decision with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education was appalling.

The email sent by the Secretary of Education to influence the decision to grant a charter to Gloucester was unconscionable because it was not about schooling but about how influential supporters might react.

The time is long overdue to fix the funding formula so the local districts will not suffer financial losses and feel hostile toward a new charter school before it even opens. The citizens of Gloucester and their elected leadership made clear their concerns that the district schools would suffer immensely due to the loss of revenue to a charter school, but they were ignored.

There is no mystery about the fall-out from revenue losses to school districts - we should not be increasing these problems in a time of such fiscal constraints.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara E. Fields
CPS Co-President

Ruth Rodriguez Fay
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