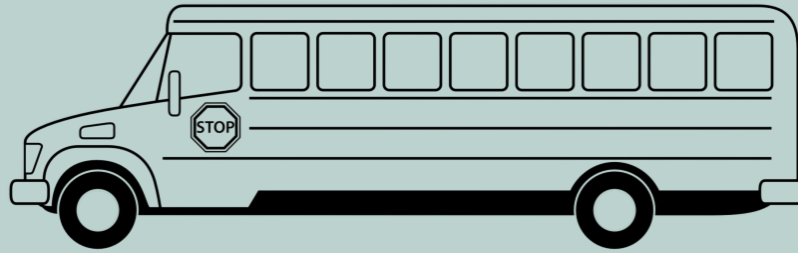


ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PERIL



BACKGROUND:

Last Fall, Dr. Kelvin R. Adams, Saint Louis Public Schools Superintendent, released a proposal to close 11 schools. Many of the district's 68 school buildings, serving just under 20,000 students, have less than 200 students. SLPS manages more school buildings per capita than any other district in the surrounding Saint Louis area.

While activists and community leaders fought to save historic schools such as Sumner high school, public charters in Saint Louis are ballooning; growing to over 40% of students in the city. If this growth of charters continues at this rate, SLPS could be defunct within five years.



IN 2020, SLPS ENROLLMENT DIPPED BELOW 20,000 STUDENTS; AT ITS PEAKED, MORE THAN 115,000 STUDENTS ATTENDED SLPS.



CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED WHILE SLPS ENROLLMENT HAS DECLINED. TODAY, 60% OF STUDENTS ATTEND SLPS, AND 40% ATTEND CHARTERS.



WITHOUT A MORATORIUM, SAINT LOUIS COULD BE A FULL CHARTER CITY WITHIN 5 YEARS.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Work with Jefferson city to impose a moratorium on new Charter schools that has legal force.

2

Appoint a task force to explore how to equitably consolidate SLPS further to ensure that it remains competitive with charters.

3

Give SLPS stakeholders a say in the tax abatements and TIFs process. Each year, SLPS loses tens of millions of dollars because of tax breaks and has no say in how these tax breaks are decided.

4

Create channels of communication between the Mayor, BOA, SLPS admin, and students to understand how to move SLPS forward.



The highest priority for Saint Louis policymakers is to work with Jefferson city to craft a moratorium on new Charter schools in Saint Louis City.

Jefferson has been very friendly toward Charter schools, with at least two bills gaining steam this session.

CLOSING SCHOOLS IS HARD. NO ONE WANTS TO DO IT. SAINT LOUIS DOES NOT HAVE 950K PEOPLE ANYMORE, IT DOES NOT NEED A SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR 110,000+ STUDENTS ANYMORE. WE HAVE KICKED THE CAN DOWN THE ROAD TOO LONG. IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, WE MAY NOT HAVE AN SLPS TO "SAVE" IN 10 YEARS.

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