



"You Are the Key to a Safe City"

The PEACE CENTER

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16 May 2008

Mr. Paul Pastorek, Superintendent of Schools
Louisiana Dept. of Education
1201 No. Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Re: 5 year vision

Dear Sir:

As the convener of the Frederick A. Douglass Community Coalition (FDCC), it has come to our attention there is little to no community involvement in the future of our children in the arena of public education. The event of 29 August 2005 as well as a political intervention has changed the landscape of public education in New Orleans.

We, in recent weeks, have been in conversation with Paul Vallas around the possibility of the closure of Douglass High. In these conversations information has been somewhat contradictory. We are told there are 3500 – 4000 high school students in the city and some 25 high schools. On the surface this appears to be poor management of resources and poor planning. Given the belief New Orleans will have an increase in population at some point, we believe there must be some community conversations around the preparation for our future. One of the most important conversations to break is the one of "the education of My child", rather than the education of all children in our community. We must begin to see all of our children as valuable not just the ones in our personal households.

The facility at Frederick Douglass is old and has not been cared for in many years, but is a viable facility and can be used in this period of transition. We are planning two new "state-of-the-arts" high schools that won't be available for another two years. We have the possibility of a third in the G. W. Carver site rather than putting students in trailers. In any event, FDCC is opposed to any of our children in trailers (prison camps). Our children can be housed in existing facilities and later disbursed to the new ones; the role of demolition is not always first.

We are present to the fact that the public school system was in need of intervention; the political intervention we received was much like the baby in the bath water. We truly need a local school board and direct input to the system which ever one we have.

Yours in the Cause of Common-Unity,

R. D. Lawson, Director

Cc: Paul Vallas, Wilfred Johnson

We believe peace and safety will be restored to our City, by uniting diverse groups of the community"