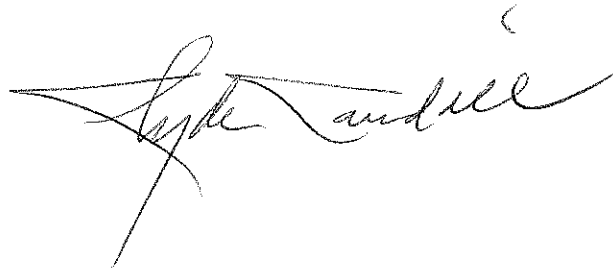


To: Senate Education Committee Members

From: Clyde Caudill, Legislative Agent  
Jefferson County Public Schools  
Phone Number: 502-797-4292

Date: February 26, 2013  
Senate Education Called Committee Meeting

Subject: Written comments in opposition to SB 176

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde Caudill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "C" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

## **Comments Regarding Senate Bill 176**

Senate Bill 176 would create a fifth option, a charter school option, for intervention in persistently low-achieving schools under KRS 160.346. For PLA schools implementing the restaffing or transformation option, that do not meet achievement targets for three consecutive years, the bill requires the school district to implement one of the other three options:

- School Closure Option
- Education Management Organization (EMO) Option
- Charter School Option

Jefferson County Public Schools, which has a number of schools that would potentially be impacted by this legislation, has two fundamental concerns with SB 176:

- JCPS has a new, strong leadership team in place that is aggressively working to implement reform plans to make dramatic improvements in academic achievement in our PLA schools. SB 176 would disrupt that work before it has a chance to be fully implemented. It would require these schools to start from scratch, losing the benefit of the work of the last several years.
- Charter schools have not been shown to be any more effective than traditional public schools in improving academic achievement.

### **The JCPS Leadership Team and Plan for Dramatic Improvement in PLA Schools**

#### **JCPS Turnaround Leadership**

- Under the leadership of Superintendent Donna Hargens, since her arrival 18 months ago, JCPS has undertaken a comprehensive and systemic restructuring of the district's organizational structure, to target resources and attention on the primary mission of the district - improving academic achievement.
- Particular attention has been paid to the difficult and years-long work to improve academic achievement in PLA schools. JCPS has been working closely with Kentucky Department of Education staff who are assigned to assist our school and district leadership.
- Toward the end of the 2011-2012 school year, Dr. Hargens hired Dr. Dewey Hensley to be Chief Academic Officer for the district. Dr Hensley is arguably the most qualified school turnaround expert in Kentucky. Commissioner Holliday said the following regarding Dr. Hensley: "Dewey ... brings great knowledge and experience in the areas of school turnaround and improvement."

- From 2011-2012, Dr. Hensley worked for the Kentucky Department of Education as Associate Commissioner of the Office of District 180. In that role, he was the Commissioner's personal choice to lead state support for persistently low-achieving schools.
- Prior to that, Dr. Hensley was principal of Atkinson Elementary in Jefferson County, where he led the school to make dramatic improvements in academic achievement.

### **JCPS Turnaround Plan**

- Dr. Hensley, and his team of experienced and highly qualified school leaders and district administrators, in close collaboration with KDE staff, have developed strong turnaround plans to improve academic achievement in PLA schools. Components of the plans include:
  - Redirection of significant resources from central office administration into schools.
  - Implementation of Professional Learning Communities.
  - Implementation of Student Response Teams to provide targeted, immediate, intensive, and research-based responses to individual student needs, including academic, behavioral, social challenges that affect academic success..
  - Frequent collaboration with KDE Education Recovery staff regarding planning and implementation strategies.
  - On-going coaching and monitoring by Assistant Superintendent and ETCs.
  - District facilitation of resources and support with sustainability plans.

### **SB 176 will Undermine Turnaround Efforts Already Underway**

- This plan, under this new leadership team, needs the time and opportunity to work. We have a plan. It is a good one. And we are working very hard to implement it.
- Turnaround work is very, very hard. Implementation of yet another intervention option after three years will mean that years of hard work of dedicated teachers and school leaders will be lost.
- Another PLA intervention will mean more churn and turmoil within schools, which is not conducive to meaningful, dramatic, and lasting improvement in instruction and student achievement.

### **Charter Schools Are Not the Solution for PLA Schools**

The 2013 Legislative Priorities of the JCPS Board of Education states unequivocal opposition to charter schools. It states: "JCPS endorses legislation that enhances and promotes public education, and opposes the use of public dollars to finance public charter schools."

This board position was established based on a close review of research regarding the efficacy of charter schools to improve academic achievement, and an analysis of the impact of charter schools on school districts in Kentucky, particularly JCPS.

- Charter schools have not been shown to systematically improve student achievement.
- Charter schools endanger equal access to a high quality education for all students.
- Charter schools threaten JCPS reforms for expanded choice and innovative educational practice.
- Charter schools would create significant funding inequities between charter schools and traditional public schools.

#### **Charter schools have not been shown to systematically improve student achievement**

- The most detailed national assessment of charter schools was released in 2009 by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University (CREDO). This study examined student achievement growth longitudinally on state achievement tests in both reading and math and assessed how students who attend charter schools would have fared if they would have attended a public school. The study found that:
  - 46% of charter schools were performing no better than public schools;
  - 37% performed worse than public schools; and
  - 17% performed better.
- Students in charter schools scored significantly lower than traditional public schools in reading and mathematics on the NAEP assessment, "the Nation's Report Card."
- The 2003 NAEP data shows fourth graders attending charter schools perform about half a year behind students in other public schools in both reading and math.

#### **Charter schools threaten JCPS reforms for expanded choice and educational innovation**

JCPS is implementing a robust set of strategies and spending millions of dollars to dramatically improve the quality of education being provided to all children, including:

- A fair and equitable student assignment plan;
- The maintaining and improving school choice and magnet programs; and
- Across-the-board implementation of research-based practices to improve teaching and learning, including high-quality professional development, differentiated instruction, caring classrooms, and increased parent and community participation.

- Active work toward the creation of “Schools of Innovation” under the provisions of HB 37 (2012 RS)

The introduction of charter schools would disrupt full implementation of these proven, targeted strategies, and reduce the likelihood for success.

**Charter schools would create significant funding inequities between charter schools and traditional public schools**

- Senate Bill 176 would provide dramatically greater funding to charter schools than to traditional public schools of the same size, because the district would have to provide all per pupil and categorical funds directly to a charter school.
- Such a model, wherein “the dollars follow the student,” creates an unfair funding structure in several ways:
  - Allocations to traditional public schools do not represent a district’s full per pupil expenditure; significant expenditures take place at the district level to provide system-wide services in order to maximize efficiencies and cost savings;
  - There would be minimal marginal savings due to reduced enrollments at traditional public schools, since the major expenditures for teacher and classified staff, as well as fixed costs, would not change significantly; and
  - Funds sent to charter schools would represent much more than the amount required for the normal functioning of a school, in some cases more than 200 percent of funds allocated to a similarly-sized traditional public school.