

600FOROURSCHOOLS.ORG

PLEDGE AS MUCH OF YOUR \$600 TAX REBATE AS POSSIBLE

**HELP SUPPORT THE APPEAL OF THE COURT CASE AGAINST
THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

**HELP BUILD A FUND THAT WILL SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE FOR
THE LONG HAUL**

**We are a group of parents, staff and elected board members of the St. Louis Public
Schools.**

We believe that a thriving democracy relies on a healthy public school system.

**We also believe that public education, especially public education in this city,
is under a systematic political attack that threatens to destroy an institution that was
built with care over the past century.**

WE ARE AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE. LET'S ACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

- Voters of the City of St. Louis were disenfranchised in June 2007 when a three-person Special Administrative Board was put in place by the state. Rick Sullivan, appointed by the governor, was given the title of CEO and Superintendent.
- The SAB did not arrive with a new plan, new resources, or a strong background in education. They relied on the existing plan and the expertise of Dr. Diana Bourisaw to keep the district running from June until now.
- The state takeover reduced the elected board to a consultative role. They have been thwarted, however, even in that limited role by Rick Sullivan's refusal to allow Dr. Bourisaw to attend the public meetings of the elected board since last June.
- Sullivan needed the support of his state senator, Joan Bray, in order to receive senate approval. Bray withheld her support for a full ten months, from March 22, 2007 until late January 2008, concerned that Sullivan did not have a background in education. She gave her consent just days before the deadline. It seems she was satisfied that with Bourisaw in the superintendent's office, the district was enjoying a period of stability and solid academic leadership. Within a week of Sullivan's confirmation by the full senate, Boursaw was out.
- The search that is about to begin will not be a search for "a new superintendent" but for an academic

officer who is willing to work in a subordinate role, taking direction from CEO/Superintendent Rick Sullivan and the SAB. As many educators have noted, well-qualified superintendents are not likely to apply for such a position. Dr. Bourisaw noted in her interview with Charles Jaco that the applicant pool will more likely be a puddle.

- The elected board and Bourisaw have been clear about the destabilizing effect of expanding charter schools beyond the current number while the mayor and other political forces continue to push them forward. Even Rick Sullivan acknowledged at a meeting of the Parent Assembly in September that "if you continue to push" for charter schools, "you will destroy the system." Nonetheless, the SAB continues to promote more charter schools, putting the financial stability of the district in immediate jeopardy.
- Privatizing public education under the guise of charter schools is the dominant theme, yet the charter schools that have opened in the City over the past few years have a dismal record. They have, with few exceptions, not lived up to the hype. We are being told by the mayor and others that the new crop of charters will be different with no reason to believe that.
- Strong public schools play a critical role in neighborhoods. Several years ago Slay's slate of four closed 16 schools without public input. The closings have continued without a serious overall plan for the future of the district. Academic priorities have taken a back seat with, for example, schools shifting from K-5 to K-8 and back again.
- The majority of the charter schools that have opened in St. Louis are run by out-of-state corporations for a profit. Who watches out for the common good when these corporations decide to close up when the profit dries up? And who educates the children that the charters toss out just days before the MAP test? At the moment the SLPS bears the burden in all these cases. What will happen when the district has been completely dismantled?

Why 600 for our schools? The answer is simple. We must take action now to preserve the incredible legacy of public education that generations of St. Louisans have built over the past century. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "**There is such a thing as too late.**" Once the schools are closed, the buildings sold, and the education of our city's children handed over to corporate owners, it will be too late.

We are urging you to seriously consider committing as much of your \$600 tax rebate to the cause as you possibly can. We want to build up a fund that can sustain the effort for the long haul.

[PLEDGE TODAY!](http://www.600forourschools.org) And then share this website with your friends, neighbors and co-workers. We want to announce 100 pledges by April 1. VISIT [HTTP://WWW.600FOROURSCHOOLS.ORG](http://www.600forourschools.org)

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