

Sheldon, Tina (CI-StPaul)

From: Joe Nathan <joe@centerforschoolchange.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 11:58 AM
To: HRAHearing (CI-StPaul); Chris Tolbert; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul); Jalali, Mitra (CI-StPaul); Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul); Thao, Dai (CI-StPaul); Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Recommendation that St Paul City Council continue to maintain its flexibility re use of conduit bonds

Dear St Paul City Council/HRA Members:

Today I write as a parent of 3 children who attended the St Paul Public Schools k-12, a person who spent 14 years as a SPPS teacher/administrator and additional years as a SPPS PTA president and site council member for 2 district public schools, and as a grandparent of 3 children attending St. Paul Public Schools. I've also served as a project director on a major education project for the National Governors Association, working directly with, among others, Governors Rudy Perpich, Bill Clinton, Lamar Alexander and Richard Riley. Governors in more than 30 states, from Hawaii to Massachusetts asked me to provide technical assistance to them. I also was on the Board of Advisors of the National Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities. I've also lived in, worked in and paid taxes in St. Paul for more than 40 years.

These experiences lead me to urge you to retain the flexibility of the St. Paul HRA to examine each proposed opportunity to guarantee conduit bonds on a case by case basis, rather than adopting a blanket moratorium on any group of schools or institutions. I fully support developing metrics that you use to consider proposals. As one of you said to me recently, this might include, for example, requiring some payment from a school if the school wishes to have loan guarantees that would take a building which currently is paying property taxes, off the property tax roles.

However, having chartered public school options has

- * Generated millions of dollars for the city (which is to say, for us, the taxpayers) as well as you who decide how to spend this money
- * Provide new opportunities for students with whom traditional schools have not succeeded (I urge you, for example, to check out High School for Recording Arts and Avalon, as two examples of this)
- * Attracted suburban students into the city (Conservatory for Performing Arts, Great River and Nova are three such examples)
- * Offered new options now available
- * Encouraged the St Paul (district) schools to improve their program (as for example, created a Montessori middle school, and expanding space in an elementary school that has a waiting list)

On balance, all of these are good for the city as a whole.

So, I encourage you to retain flexibility. Please do not adopt a moratorium on guaranteeing conduit bonds for chartered public schools.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely

Joe Nathan, PhD, Director, Center for School Change