

Sheldon, Tina (CI-StPaul)

From: Nancy Dana <ndana168@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:22 PM
To: HRAHearing (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Chris Tolbert; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul); Jalali, Mitra (CI-StPaul); Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul); Thao, Dai (CI-StPaul); Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Re: Recommendation that St Paul City Council continue to maintain its flexibility re use of conduit bonds

Good Morning!

I am joining the many voices that URGE YOU to retain flexibility. Please do not adopt a moratorium on gurantanteeing conduit bonds for chartered public schools.

As a proud member of the St Paul community, a teacher and Administrator within the St Paul Public Schools traditional district as well as a teacher and Superintendent for Charter Schools, I share the voice to urge you to not place a moratorium on bonding, but rather to continue to hear each case individually.

I believe we have proven that there is room for both public charter and public traditional schools. We have also worked hard to not only remain in St Paul but to keep our business leaders and families happy to stay in St Paul. Over the past weekend we successfully held our first Virtual St Paul Charter School Fair where over 800 visits have been made to our fair website featuring the 37 charter schools located within the St Paul city limits.

This was an astonishing realization. Parents want choice, and they are seeking ways to provide programs that meet their specific child's needs. As a city governance board you have supported that choice in the past, for which I express my gratitude, and ask you to remember that for the future.

Each school is different, and what is needed to meet the requirements or requests of the Charter families is reflected just as it is asked within the traditional district programs. Since Charters have NEVER been in the position to have the facilities as are available within SPPS, the need for growth and redesign should not be a punishment, but rather a celebration for the students and families in St Paul.

As the city that established **the first** charter school in the nation, which is still in high demand today, please do not limit the possibilities now after 30 years of established growth and providing excellent results. Let each school come to you as their needs require. There is room for everyone at the table.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue!

Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of any assistance in this discussion!

Best wishes,



Nancy R Dana
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On Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 11:58 AM Joe Nathan <joe@centerforschoolchange.org> wrote:

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