

PETITION FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FUTURE OF CATHERINE FERGUSON ACADEMY (CFA)

Whereas:

CFA is a nationally renowned, successful high school that has provided a quality education for pregnant and parenting teen girls for twenty years. CFA offers;

- small classes to provide a supportive learning environment
- a modified schedule and dual enrollment night school to allow students to recover credits and get a head start on college
- Support services like WIC, healthcare for moms and babies, and early education from birth through pre-K.
- An organic farm and orchard that provide a unique outdoor learning environment

CFA is more than the sum of its programs; it is a lifeline for growth, development and a better future for the young women and their children. **Pregnancy is the number one reason girls drop out of school.** Approximately 70% of teenage girls who give birth leave school (ACLU.org). All CFA graduates are accepted to community college or university and secured with financial aid.

In a recent press statement, the new EM, Roy Roberts, lumped CFA in with remedial programs at Barsamian and Hancock, but CFA is not a remedial program. Being pregnant is not a crime, and pregnant girls should be supported, not punished and degraded.

“Transition” back to a regular high school with no infant care and pre-school, no credit recovery program, no parenting classes, no support for the young mothers to continue their education and enhance the education of their children, will force these young women out of school.

The community supports CFA, and deserves the transparency and accountability that its public school system should provide.

Therefore:

We the undersigned, call on EM Roy Roberts to attend a public hearing on the future of CFA, at a time and place convenient to the community, to hear from the CFA students, teachers and community about the importance of maintaining CFA as it currently exists, and to answer questions about the actual costs to DPS, how much is covered by federal funds, and the costs to the students, their children and the community if CFA is closed.