

["The Locks Conference October 3rd"](#)

YouTube

"The 16th Annual International Locks Conference: Natural hair, Wholistic Health & Beauty Expo October 2nd & 3rd 2010 @ The Walter D. Palmer Charter School, 6th & Girard Avenue, Philadelphia, PA. Opening Libations Ceremony..."

October 12, 2010

Philadelphia Tribune

"Successful charter says District owes funds"

Linn Washington Jr.

Show-and-Tell didn't go well for some students attending the **Walter D. Palmer** Leadership Learning Charter School in North Philadelphia on the first day of the 2010 school year last month.

Those **Palmer** School students went to Philadelphia School District headquarters on Broad near Spring Garden to tell Superintendent Arlene Ackerman about an urgent million-dollar matter impacting their education but Ackerman didn't show up to hear their concerns.

Curiously, that day when 500 **Palmer** students, parents, teachers and administrators marched more than a mile from their school for that protest demonstration Show-and-Tell with Ackerman her 'first day' activities included visiting two North Philly schools - one just blocks from the **Palmer** School.

The **Palmer** School says the School District owes it \$1.7-million for operating high school classes that top School District officials approved but never funded as promised.

The School District counters that the **Palmer** School, on N. Sixth Street near Girard Ave., never obtained formal approval from the School Reform Commission (SRC) before launching its high school thus the District owes nothing.

Dr. **Walter D. Palmer**, the noted activist/educator who founded the school in 2000, says that while numerous former District and SRC leaders repeatedly gave him approvals the District's Charter School Office didn't get formal SRC approval.

"We received the approvals and proceeded in good faith but the Charter School Office didn't put the approvals in front of the SRC. I've publicly critiqued the Charter School Office. We think this refusal to pay us is retaliation," **Palmer** said.

Evidence available for the lawsuit the Palmer School filed recently against the School District seeking that \$1.7-million includes a 2007 email from a ranking District administrator confirming that the Palmer School's received proper green-lights from District big-wigs.

That email states an approval resolution for the School "was pulled" from the SRC's October and November meetings in 2007 - weeks after Palmer began operating high school classes as directed by District/SRC officials.

The School District declined comment on "any specifics" citing the Palmer School's lawsuit.

SRC Chairman Robert Archie could not be reached for comment either by telephone or email. Dr. Palmer contends he received commitments from Archie earlier this year to release the \$1.7 million.

The SRC, in June 2010, renewed the Palmer School's charter for another five years but capped enrollment at 675 telling the School to immediately begin phasing out its high school yet still providing no funding for those high school students currently enrolled.

"This is as convoluted as you ever want to make it," Palmer said. "I'm carrying 900 students already but they are only paying me for 675."

The Palmer School is the first charter in America with a curriculum focus on social justice and character development. Dr. Palmer's background with educating dates from 1954 when he opened the Black People's University of Philadelphia as an independent entity providing preschool and adult education.

The Palmer School's student body is a mix of Black, Hispanic and Asian students all from low-income households including a few from homeless shelters. The school also enrolls special education students unlike many charters.

This school's success rates in academic achievement and attendance most often exceed rates at comparable public schools.

"Palmer's school is essential because there are quality of life issues being taught along with academics," said Chad Lassiter, President of the Black Men at Penn School of Social Work, Inc and a supporter of Palmer's school.

Controversy from this cold-cash clash between the District and the Palmer School roils from North Philly through Harrisburg to Washington carrying some heavy-duty consequences statewide.

The lawsuit challenges the District's claimed authority to cap enrollments at charter schools citywide, a posture contradicting a Commonwealth Court ruling covering school districts statewide.

Last month Pennsylvania's Department of Education notified Superintendent Ackerman it was withholding \$1,678,579.18 from funds for the District to provide the Palmer School its disputed payment. That notification letter "strongly" encouraged the District to "resolve" the dispute; a suggestion District officials' spurned opting instead to appeal the state's action.

State legislators, Democrat and Republican, have called on Ackerman to provide the disputed funding to the Palmer School as have nine of Philadelphia City Council's 17 members. City and statewide charter school organizations back the Palmer School.

A June 28, 2010 letter to Ackerman from the Philadelphia state legislative delegation credited the Palmer School for creating "a comprehensive and robust intervention program dealing with underperforming students" urging Ackerman to support "this school's educational achievements through adequate funding."

Palmer sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education late last month requesting an investigation of "repressive measures" directed at certain Philadelphia charter schools. Philadelphia has 74 charter schools.

This School District-vs.-Palmer School clash comes at a time of renewed national attention on charter school benefits and the District/SRC not having approved any new community-based charter schools in Philadelphia during the past three years.

While VIPs like billionaires Bill Gates and Oprah laud charters controlled by private corporations, persons like Chad Lassiter and Walter Palmer warned of dangers to independent, community-based educational institutions.

"These [corporate] operatives are not concerned all of a sudden with the education of Black and brown children," Lassiter observed.

"Why are we not empowering the Black superheroes like **Walter Palmer**, whose school's mission, history and philosophy are rooted in the community based charter school movement?"

October 27, 2010

BlackandNobel Books

["Freeway promotes youth talent!!"](#)

YouTube

"Off The Streets and Onto The Stage presented by The Walter D. Palmer Leadership & Learning Partners Charter School provides an opportunity for the area's youth to participate in a positive experience by displaying their artistic talents and to bring the community together to celebrate them...check out more videos at www.ErieAve.com or www.WeShipToPrisons.com"

May 17, 2011

Philadelphia Tribune

"SPORTS BRIEFS"

Anonymous

Local chess team excels

The **Walter D. Palmer** Leadership Lions Dark Knights has put together one of the best scholastic chess teams not only in Pennsylvania, but also around the country. The team recently competed in the Greater Philadelphia Chess League and two players scored five points out of 10 matches. Gary Spencer and Destin Whitfield each scored five points.

A month ago, the team had three standouts in the city all-star game. The team had Vanita Young, Dwayne Darby and Spencer representing the all-star team for the South. Masterman and Palumbo both had one chess player on the all-star team, too.

The school also competed at Chess Nationals in Nashville, Tenn. The team placed 21st overall in the country. They received a trophy for their performance in the under 1600 section. This was the second highest section at the event. The team's top performers were Spencer (5.0, 1395), Young (4.0, 1,429), Dwayne Darby (3.0, 1362) and Whitfield (2.0, 1228). The team is preparing for the World Open in July.