

The charter school was accused of irregular bookkeeping practices and academic outcomes that fell below established benchmarks. A fourth and final hearing set to resume Wednesday could result in further disciplinary action, including closing remaining school operations.

Staff Writer Larry Miller contributed to this story.

Sidebar

Walter Palmer testified Monday at revocation hearing at the School District of Philadelphia's headquarters. In an unrelated move, Palmer ordered the charter high school closed. - PHOTO BY TRIBUNE CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER ABDULAR R. SULAYMAN

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Action News

6ABC

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["Parents demand answer after charter school closes abruptly"](#)

Angry parents gathered in Frankford Monday night, wanting to know why their children's school was shutting down with what they said was virtually no advance notice.

Students arrived Monday morning to find the high school portion of the Walter D. Palmer Learning Partners Charter School closed.

Some families said they received a phone call with a recorded message Sunday night telling students not to come to class. Others said they showed up ready for school, only to be turned away.

On Monday night, the school's founder, addressed a gathering of parents.

Dr. Walter Palmer explained a court order was forcing the school to reconfigure in order to adhere to an enrollment cap.

Spokesperson Fernando Gallard from the School District of Philadelphia says last month the district was informed by the charter school of an eventual closing.

So the district created a special tab on its website and began helping students transition into their school communities.

However, the abrupt closing took even the school district by surprise.

Now, nearly 300 9th through 12th graders, 80 seniors, are looking for new classrooms in the city.

"They gave us a list of the schools. We're not getting answers," parent Pamela Jones said.

Dr. Palmer addressed parents during the forum in the cafeteria, but frustrations took over.

"Tomorrow, you'll be able to get all your records," he told the parents.

For months, the school has been battling with the Philadelphia School District which is in the process of revoking its charter.

The low performing school, which also has K-8th in other locations, had 1.300 students - twice the number legally allowed.

This month, it held a lottery to cut 250 elementary students to meet regulations.

Some families also have teens at the high school.

"My niece and nephew are still at home from the elementary school. So how you going to place our high school students? He hasn't even placed the elementary kids yet," parent LaCheryl Sanders said.

Palmer took the heat as other parents learned of options and even signed up at other schools.

"I invited you guys (the media) in knowing what some of the reaction would be because I wanted you to see it and I wanted the city to see it. I want people to recognize these are the at-risk children, at-risk families that people don't care about," Palmer said.

While confusion and chaos took over the cafeteria, 11th grader Yarcelis Lopez was upstairs cleaning out her locker.

"My mom doesn't want me to go to a public school. There is a cyber-school that they want us to get into but I would rather have my education in a school than home," Lopez said.

The district says West Philadelphia High has offered to take all the displaced seniors and Palmer will be open all week to help with the transfers.

Right now, the school also can't answer what is next for its teachers and staff.

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