

"I would not necessarily say sabotage, what I'm saying is that they want those kids back, that will fill those holes, those gaps, those deficits, that they have," David Weathington said.

More than 600 students are going to have to be placed in other schools.

The school district says parents can do that through a number of ways:

- Online through a dedicated website
- By coming to district headquarters on Wednesday or Friday mornings this week
- By coming to district headquarters 9am to 5pm next Monday
- Go directly to their neighborhood school to enroll next Monday

"We'll get students enrolled immediately, even without the records, cause we believe it's important that they are back in school," district spokesman Fernando Gaillard said.

On Monday evening, parents upset about the closing gathered outside the school for a rally.

"The charter school office and the school district have been very unhelpful with my process. They don't give me any information. They have no information. They are very nasty to us," parent Jihan Pauling said.

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**Dec. 31, 2014**

**Philadelphia Daily News**

**"Palmer charter parents make last ditch plea to the state"**

**By SOLOMON LEACH**

FRUSTRATED PARENTS and guardians from Walter D. Palmer Leadership Learning Partners Charter School said they have asked the state for an emergency charter to keep the K-8 school open just days after the founder announced it would close tomorrow.

Huddled outside the school's Northern Liberties campus last night, about 10 adults said they were baffled by the short notice of the closing - families received a letter on Friday - and skeptical about the Philadelphia School District's transition process for the roughly 600 displaced pupils.

"It's just been a real agonizing process because you don't know what's going to happen, and I just feel like the school district owed us a little bit more due respect because they oversee [the school]," said Jihan Pauling, whose son is a second-grader at Palmer.

In Palmer's letter to families, the school said the closing was a result of the district's unwillingness to work with them to repay \$1.5 million ordered by the state Supreme Court earlier this year. The school claimed that the district was going to deduct \$250,000 monthly from its operating funds, starting in January.

The parent group said it sent a letter yesterday to Acting Secretary of Education Carolyn Dumaresq asking for an emergency charter to keep the doors open under the direction of Stacey Cruise of Legacy School Services, which partnered with Palmer earlier this year to improve academic performance.

The elementary school's closing is the latest twist in the Palmer saga. In October, the charter eliminated grades nine through 12 at its Frankford campus after it was forced to reduce enrollment from more than 1,200 pupils to 675, following a series of court rulings.

For years, the school's founder, Walter D. Palmer, argued that it was unlawful to cap charter enrollment, which was upheld by the courts. In May, however, the state Supreme Court sided with the district, claiming that the charter had agreed to the limit in a signed 2005 document. It required the charter to repay \$1.5 million paid out for students in the upper grades.

"We had never missed a payroll in 15 years, and that's what was looming over our head," Palmer told the *Daily News* yesterday. He said the board of trustees approved the closing in mid-December but did not inform families immediately because "we were still hoping, still trying to get the district to work with us so that we would not have to close."

Despite dejection about the closings, Palmer said he appreciates the parents who fought with him for charter reform.

"I'm going to continue this fight," he vowed, adding that he would also see families through the transition.

Due to the circumstances, the district will accept pupils from Palmer immediately without their transcripts, district spokesman Fernando Gallard said. Families wishing to enroll children in a neighborhood public school can register in person. Those who wish to attend citywide- or special-admission schools can fill out an application online or at the district's headquarters at 440 N. Broad St. from 10 a.m. to noon tomorrow, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday.

Some parents say that the transition process has been rocky. Pauling said she tried to enroll her son at one of the suggested district schools in October, but that the school told her they were not aware of the transition and did not have room.

"My son is very uneasy about school, the status of him going to school," she said. "He feels like no school wants him."

Barbara Carroll, a grandmother of two Palmer pupils, said she is not comfortable sending them to their neighborhood school. She would opt for a private school if Palmer closes, although she hopes that won't happen.

"The bottom line," Carroll said, "is that our children's livelihoods and their education [are] at stake right now."

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**January 2, 2015**

**Philadelphia Tribune**

"Palmer charter school finally closes its doors permanently"

Wilford Shamlin III

After more than a year of scrutiny over academic performance and financial soundness, the **Walter D. Palmer** Leadership Learning Partners Charter School announced this week it will not reopen after the Christmas break.

The last day of operation for administrators will be Wednesday, Dec. 31.

The school district said it will immediately enroll about 400 kindergarten through eighthgrade students from **Palmer**. Enrollment sessions to help families with the transition are scheduled at the school district headquarters, 440 N. Broad St., on Dec. 31, Jan. 2 and Jan. 5.

The school collapsed under mounting financial pressure as the city school district, seeking reimbursement of more than \$1.4 million in enrollment-based fees, began withholding monthly reimbursement of roughly \$250,000 since early summer. School officials said the district paid more than it should have because enrollment statistics submitted by the school were higher than actual enrollment.

A vote by the board of trustees stemmed from a court decision ordering **Palmer** charter school to return the millions of dollars in enrollment-based fees to the school district, **Palmer** officials said in a statement.

The school was under pressure from the district for issues relating to students' academic performance, bookkeeping practices and reimbursement of fees from the district. In August, **Palmer** shut down its high school campus, 5502 Harbison Ave., in the city's Northeast section, in order to