

There is no school slated for Friday but come Monday, those students who did not get chosen in the lottery will not be allowed to return.

October 28, 2014

900AM-WURD

["Interview with Dr. Walter D. Palmer"](#)

YouTube

"900AM-WURD interviews Dr. Walter D. Palmer, founder of Philadelphia's Walter D. Palmer Leadership Learning Partners Charter School, which abruptly closed its high school on 10/27/14. Dr. Palmer discusses the financial and legal troubles recently faced by the school as well as relocation plans and options for its high school students."

Oct. 28, 2014

Philadelphia Inquirer

"Embattled Palmer charter to close its high school"

By MARTHA WOODALL

The embattled Walter D. Palmer Leadership Learning Partners Charter School is closing its high school two months into the academic year.

The move affects 286 students in ninth through 12th grades at the charter's secondary campus in Frankford.

In an e-mail sent to staff Sunday, the school's chief administrative officer said the students would be welcome to transfer to West Philadelphia High School.

A parents' meeting was scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday to explain that transfer process, as well as other options for students at district, charter, cyber and Catholic schools.

The high school canceled classes for the day.

Walter D. Palmer, board chairman of the school that bears his name, said that while high school students can continue to come to school for guidance and help, classes have ended.

The move does not affect the school's kindergarten through eighth grade students, who are split between the campus in Frankford and the charter's headquarters in Northern Liberties.

School spokeswoman Maura Pennington said Palmer officials are "trying to find appropriate placement" for all the high school students.

The charter had warned the district last month that it might have to close soon if it did not obtain an immediate infusion of cash.

District spokesman Fernando Gallard said the district held meetings and sent letters to parents to explain the transfer process.

He said Palmer officials had approached the administration of West Philadelphia High about the prospects of keeping the charter's 77 seniors and, perhaps, others together for the remainder of the school year.

West Philadelphia has space in its facility, which opened a few years ago. Gallard said the district would provide additional teachers and resources depending on need.

The closing was triggered by a series of recent court decisions that found that Palmer, which had nearly 1,300 students on its rolls, was entitled to be paid only for the 675 students in its 2005 signed charter. That agreement also authorized the school to serve students in grades K-8 only.

Using a provision of the state charter law, Palmer billed the state Department of Education for the extra students. The department paid for the students and deducted the amount from the district's share of state funding.

In May, the state Supreme Court unanimously sided with the district and said the school was bound by the terms of the charter it signed in 2005.

As a result, the Education Department stopped paying the school for the extra students. Walter Palmer said the move had cost his school \$300,000 per month in revenue since June.

The charter recently held a lottery to trim 250 K-8 students from its rolls to meet the 675 limit.

Palmer said the lottery had been painful and terrible for everyone involved. He said the process the school had been forced to use suggested "black slaves being put up for auction in a slave ship."

Pennington said that after that auction, the charter realized it was still overenrolled. Rather than conduct another lottery, she said, officials decided to close the high school.

"Many of the parents will be upset even though they know the fight is going on," Palmer said.

Closing the high school was traumatic personally, Palmer said. He said the charter has been educating the children and grandchildren of city residents he trained decades ago in civil rights and community educational programs he has run for more than 40 years.

The announcement of the closing comes amid a district hearing to revoke the Palmer school's operating charter on multiple grounds, including shaky finances and a history of poor academic performance.

During his daylong testimony Monday, Palmer told the hearing officer that the school has cleared up most of the problems the School Reform Commission cited when it voted in April to begin the revocation process.

During a break in his testimony, Palmer said that the school he founded would continue to fight to remain open.

"This whole fight," he said, "is about school choice."

October 28, 2014

Philadelphia Tribune

"Palmer charter high school closes its doors"

By Wilford Shamlin, III

The **Walter Palmer** Charter High School closed suddenly Monday morning, turning some students away as they arrived for school, according to published reports and a statement from the city school district.

A **Palmer** official said no students were turned away, but one parent said she was "blindsided" by the closing.

"I work in a hospital where I can't be taking days off," Arlene Esquilin, a parent, told KYW Radio Monday. "And now I'm here, losing a day of work. I don't know where I'm going to put her."

The school plans to reconfigure from kindergarten to 12th grades to K-8, **Palmer** officials said. Shedding nearly 300 high school students was necessary to trim enrollment to 675. The charter school had been locked in a dispute with the school district of Philadelphia because its enrollment had grown to over 1,200.

"They broke the charter and operated above it, becoming a K to 12 school with 1,200 students," said Fernando Gallard, spokesman for the school district of Philadelphia. "They couldn't finance it so they went to the Pa. Department of Education and got additional funding, funding the state took away