

and you've taken the time to listen to other voices and weigh the pros and the cons, you can make a better decision.

Citifed: What's your path to victory in a multi-candidate field, with one black candidate in a majority black city?

Abraham: It's too long a question to answer, and I'm finished.

Citifed: How about a very short answer?

Abraham: You lied to me. You fibbed. Listen, you could go through 1,000 questions. We could go through this all day, but you have more than enough for 20 blogs.

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**January 6, 2015**

**Philadelphia Tribune**

"Upheaval follows Palmer charter school closure"

Wilford Shamlin, III

Amani Muhammad remembers administrators at her granddaughter's charter school defending their academic track record and explaining bookkeeping practices and accuracy of enrollment records at a public hearing in early fall.

She believed there was little wiggle room for the **Walter D. Palmer** Learning Partners Charter School after the school district initiated proceedings that could strip the school of its authority to operate. But before an administrative hearing officer could rule on the matter, the school abruptly closed on Dec. 31, throwing students and their families into upheaval in the final days of the year. Many parents had to wait until after the new year to enroll their child into a new school.

Muhammad said she wasn't entirely surprised but never expected the news to be delivered during winter break.

"It was devastating, more so for the children because my granddaughter has been in this school since pre-kindergarten," she said. "I know adults can adapt more easily to certain situations."

Sheryl Welton of Northeast Philadelphia had to scramble to register her 15-year-old daughter, after **Palmer** was shuttered in August, and she rushed to register her two youngest, following last week's closure of the lower grades on **Palmer's** former main campus.

"It's very upsetting, and it was a major setback because I'm a single parent, and I work paycheck-to-paycheck. I'm very overwhelmed," Welton said.

The cost of buying new uniforms added strain to an already-tight household budget. And it was disruptive to her youngest children's education, creating an element of uncertainty for pupils who thrive on stability.

Welton said her youngest daughter had bonded with her school bus driver, had a favorite teacher and had rapport with classmates. But in the aftermath of the school closure, she enrolled her two youngest in the Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School, which opened its administrative offices during the holiday break.

"It's been very busy this entire week," said Veronica Joyner, chief administrator of the Center City charter school, which inherited 16 pupils from the closure of Palmer "My vacation has been spent meeting parents."

The school district hosted enrollment sessions to assist families in transitioning to a new school over the winter break.

The embattled charter school found financial challenges insurmountable after the district began withholding monthly reimbursements in early summer. Earlier this year, the courts ordered the charter school to repay the school district more than \$1.4 million in fees after discrepancies between actual enrollment and enrollment statistics provided by the school's administrative office were discovered.

Palmer denied the charges at the revocation hearing, saying the errors were unintentional and made by staff members who were learning how to use a new record-keeping software.

Palmer was under pressure from the central office and the office charged with overseeing charter schools for issues relating to students' academic performance and finances. In order to keep enrollment within the limits set by its charter, Palmer shut down the high school campus at 5502 Harbison Ave. The decision stemmed from the court-ordered repayment.

The school's board of trustees stated it was acting in the best interest of students, families and school personnel in voting to close the school, according to a Dec. 26 letter signed by Palmer.