



## **Vote of No Confidence**

### **Superintendent Harrison Peters and Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green**

WHEREAS, this vote of no confidence is a means to bring forth serious concerns with the mismanagement of the Providence Public School District—and a measure of the seriousness of our conviction that Providence schools are even deeper in crisis since the state takeover; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Superintendent Harrison Peters and Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green, the following concerns have reached the level of this vote of no confidence:

#### **Failure to collaborate with educators and our union, and failure to successfully lead the district:**

- Complete disinterest (demonstrated time and again throughout their tenure in Providence) by Commissioner Infante-Green and Superintendent Peters in collaborating with educators and our union. This includes their total disregard for the voice and expertise of teachers, the frontline experts who are closest to our students and who know what is best for them. Instead of working with us, they want to fight with us.
- Failure to actively recruit and hire for the 65 current PPSD teacher vacancies, and the decision to not renew the contracts of highly qualified teachers of color.
- The lack of any serious, sustainable plan to address teacher recruitment, retention and diversity; instead, district leaders constantly blame educator unions (which have no power to hire and fire) for the district's own lack of progress in hiring educators of color, and failure in supporting and retaining these educators.
- A continued lack of rigorous educator professional development, including training in key areas such as trauma-informed teaching skills.
- The lack of transparency and effective communication with teachers and parents on vital issues, including the reorganization of the Newcomer Program at Alvarez High School without any communication with or input from parents, students and teachers.
- Commissioner Infante-Green's continuing public attacks and bullying of teachers, the very people who kept our schools open throughout this pandemic year. The commissioner continuously demoralizes educators through media and public statements.

### **Failure to address urgent school health and safety issues in a time of COVID-19:**

- Refusal to collaborate with the Providence Teachers Union on the safe reopening of school buildings, including refusing to do a thorough classroom-by-classroom inspection for safety hazards. District officials had to be pushed publicly to conduct safety inspections of Providence schools, despite long-documented health and safety issues in Providence schools.
- The reopening of Providence schools by district and state officials despite the fact that many schools lacked basic safety measures as recorded in simplified “walkthroughs.” Proven safety mitigations, such as increased ventilation through air filters and school-accessible testing, were unavailable as late as December.
- Failure to enforce recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including six-foot distancing in classrooms, social distancing throughout schools and maintaining stable pods. Containment measures such as contact tracing were consistently late, due to lack of state staffing.
- Failure to provide classroom ventilators until there was intense pressure from teachers and other community members. Until then, windows had to be kept open and students were freezing and having difficulty concentrating.

### **Failure to address education imperatives during the pandemic:**

- Refusal to collaborate with the PTU to create a well-run Virtual Learning Academy, resulting in the implementation of a flawed, chaotic VLA.
  - An arbitrary Aug. 19 deadline given to parents and students to choose virtual learning, without language justice in communication—let alone clear communication on its consequences with high school VLA. Providence educators lacked any schedule for in-person and VLA instruction—and lacked essential training on VLA protocols—as late as the Friday before school starting.
  - Lack of communication and transparency with VLA parents. Over 1,000 calls to the district’s VLA hotline went unanswered. Some medically fragile students and students with disabilities were left without placement in VLA for over a month after the start of the school year.
  - The ballooning of elementary VLA classroom sizes to up to 52 students, due to the district’s poorly executed VLA implementation. Educators had to mobilize a 1,500-plus signature petition to force the superintendent and commissioner to address the most serious educational crises within the VLA chaos. Even now, VLA students and teachers still do not have adequate educational materials and supplies needed to implement the curriculum with fidelity.

- Failure to provide support and professional development for multilingual learner and dual language educators who are forced to teach in-person students and students assigned to the Virtual Learning Academy simultaneously.
- Failure to hire sufficient number of substitute teachers to cover teacher absences due to COVID-19 exposure, resulting in uncertified personnel teaching students. Schools individually dealt with staffing shortages due to the lack of a coherent, science-based district policy, which not only harmed students educationally but also forced the collapsing of “stable pods” and other unsafe measures.
- The commissioner’s refusal to delay state standardized testing (RICAS) this spring as other states have done, which is wasting valuable instruction time and will further traumatize students.
- Failure to provide Providence students with academic resources to make up for learning loss due to the pandemic.
- The decreasing, from five weeks to four weeks, of the Extended School Year program for our most vulnerable and most in-need students.

**Failure to bargain in good faith and abide by the existing educator contract:**

- Superintendent Peters’ attempt to circumvent negotiating with PTU leadership in his March 5, 2021, communication to PTU members.
- The outsourcing of our bargaining unit work and violating state law by removing our school nurse teachers at Roger Williams Middle School and Mt. Pleasant High School and replacing their services with for-profit, insurance-requiring SMART Clinics.
- Consolidation of the PTU truancy officer positions while the need still exists. The work is currently being performed by central office administrators and an outside agency.

RESOLVED, that the membership of the Providence Teachers Union declares that they have no confidence in the leadership of Superintendent Harrison Peters and Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green and authorizes the PTU executive board to issue a statement of no confidence.

March 19, 2021