

Public Comments for School Board Meetings

#869

I would like to provide: *

Written Public Comments

My public comments are related to: *

General Public Comments

Topic *

JH Admin

Full Name *

Sujata Mitra

What is your relationship to ACPS? *

Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

It has been 4 weeks since the Jefferson–Houston administration was put on leave, and there's been no communication about next steps or updates. The incident was distressing, and my thoughts are with the family involved. However, the lack of communication from Central Office is concerning, especially as the community has been learning more from many who work at ACPS, about how ACPS runs the Pre–K program. The absence of Dr. McCain and Ms. Young's leadership is deeply felt, particularly during this critical time for our students' well–being. I urge you to restore stability at JH and reinstate our administrative team to rebuild trust in Central Office, while acknowledging that the investigation is ongoing.

Enter your comments here OR upload below:

What we have learned:

ACPS and JH jointly run Pre–K. Regarding your April 9th communication, leaked to AlxNow shortly after it was sent to parents, the communications approach appears calculated by ACPS Central Office to demonstrate your ability to take swift action post the Lyles Crouch gun incident. The note to parents framed the student as a Jefferson–Houston attendee, omitting that Pre–K is overseen by ACPS Early Childhood with Dr. McCain's and school collaboration. Admin collaborates with ACPS, who are the ones to interview and recommend Pre–K teacher hires. This crucial detail was omitted from the note to JH families, which circulated community–wide. Why was ACPS's role in the program not highlighted in your communication strategy?

The JH Community has been advocating for years for more special-ed resources:

The JH community, including the PTA and parents, has long pushed for increased special education resources, especially when the school expanded to K-8 and added ACPS-led Pre-K and Child Find programs. Concerns about overambition and understaffing have been raised to Central Office numerous times. Blaming and scapegoating administrators doesn't address systemic issues over how the SPED program is staffed. Educators should not bear the brunt of a flawed system created by central office. Our leaders should be at the decision making table to ensure they can be a part of the solution.

Retaining talent and good educators: The mishandling of the public response in the weeks after the incident happened, and the leaked memo have exposed dedicated JH administrators to unnecessary risk, jeopardizing their professional futures. If this were my workplace, I'd feel abandoned by the lack of support.

JH parents have a right to transparency and information: Current parents of JH families deserve transparency regarding the current status and future plans for our administration. This administration has been instrumental in fostering a vibrant and inclusive school community. Prior to their tenure, our school faced significant challenges, including a ACPS central office "open-opt in" policy that allowed principals from all over the city to automatically and disproportionately transfer behavior and special needs kids to JH. Only after parents discovered the policy, did we successfully advocate to eliminate it and have those children be educated at their home school. We also had many, many kids who were Maryland residents attending the school, with no accountability or rigor from ACPS. Only after parents started raising these concerns, did the Residency Director, with Dr. McCain's support begin to identify these students. And now, we have a vibrant community of neighborhood kids across an incredibly diverse socio-economic and racial spectrum, who love being in school with families they know and see everyday and on the weekends.

For years, our school has been overlooked and marginalized by the district and central office. Despite these challenges, we

have persevered and built a strong, diverse community where every child feels valued and supported.

The past four weeks have been a disservice to us all. We deserve better. It is imperative that we receive clear communication and reassurance about the future of our administration. Our community's stability and the school's success depends on it.

Sincerely

Sujata Mitra
