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**Dryades YMCA New Orleans
2220 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70113**

July 2, 2021

To: Staff and Families of Dryades YMCA New Orleans/James M. Singleton Charter School

From: Ms. Barbara Lacen-Keller, *Board Chairperson*
Dr. Samuel Odom, *Interim Chief Executive Officer*

Re: Status of James M. Singleton Charter School Operations

Dear Staff, Enrolled Students and Families of our Beloved Community,

In light of recent media reports of statements and representations made prematurely by NOLA Public Schools about the 2021-2022 school year without any engagement with Dryades or you, the community, we wanted to assure you, firstly, that summer camp is going very well and, secondly, that we are prepared to collaborate in good faith with NOLA Public Schools on how best to serve your interests and needs for the upcoming school year. Obviously, your voice is an important part of that conversation, and we are working very hard to ensure that you get your fair say about where you want to work, where you want to go to school and what your priorities are. **No students are being pulled or dropped from the 2021-2022 School Roster.** Your place at our current facility remains yours to keep at your option.

Today, the Dryades YMCA New Orleans, as the current operator for James M. Singleton Charter School, petitioned the Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans to protect and safeguard the ability of students, teachers and families to participate in any process going forward. We also requested a meaningful opportunity to engage with NOLA Public Schools and fully inform the Orleans Parish School Board of disputed information and claims that impact our future *before* any final decisions are made. As a result of that decisive legal intervention, the Honorable Judge Jennifer Medley issued an order preventing OPSB from interfering with the operations of James M. Singleton Charter School (including reassigning students or teachers) until Dryades YMCA and OPSB participate in good faith mediation to resolve the open disputes.

If those disagreements are not resolved by the parties, then there will be a public hearing where Dryades YMCA and the School's stakeholders can be heard regarding any proposed revocation of the charter for the James M. Singleton Charter School. As you know, the school

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continues to make significant positive progress in several areas:

- According to the most recently available assessment data, James M. Singleton Charter School is on level with or surpassing NOLA PS as supported by key metrics.
- 64% of 8th graders that were enrolled in English 1, traditionally a 9th grade course, passed the End of Course exam.
- Diebels scores and tables for K-3 students show grade level growth across the 2020-2021 school year.
- Our ELL/ESL students grew by 20% on their ELPT standardized assessments.

We are very proud of the work that has been accomplished to improve student achievement, and we know this is only the beginning of that upward trend. Given that our students attained these gains without the benefit of a full year of in-person learning for the last two academic years, we are hopeful we can continue to build on this progress if we are afforded a fair opportunity to do so.

This dispute resolution process is dynamic, evolving and time-sensitive. We will continue to ensure that all stakeholders of Dryades YMCA and James M. Singleton Charter School are kept fully informed. **This matter will come before the Civil District Court, Division F, for an in-person hearing on July 8, 2021, at 10:00am.** We remain hopeful that Dryades YMCA and NOLA Public Schools can reach a mutual agreement on how to move forward prudently in good faith as we both strive to put the best interest of our community's children first in accordance with our mutual obligations under the charter agreement.

Finally, we are implementing social and emotional support system for those families who feel overwhelmed or confused by all of this information. Some of you have reached out to us with great concern about your displacement and we will do every reasonable thing to undergird you and the children as we navigate through this period.

Very respectfully,



Samuel Odom, Ph.D.
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Barbara Lacen-Keller

Barbara Lacen-Keller
Board Chairperson