



May 9, 2017

Dr. Henderson Lewis
3520 General De Gaulle Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70114

Re: OPSB Notice of Non-Compliance Letter dated May 8, 2017

Greetings Dr. Lewis,

It is with great displeasure that I have to write this letter on behalf of our organization which has consistently stood for providing choice to and advocacy for all parents of New Orleans children, especially those who are disadvantaged, in accessing a quality education. This commitment has been demonstrated through our active involvement with ONEAPP and EnrollNOLA. Over the last five years, InspireNOLA has participated in the ONEAPP advisory committee, advocated for OPSB high schools to join ONEAPP early, participated in numerous discussions regarding school choice and advocated for a system that holds schools accountable and provides a quality seat for every child.

Until now, InspireNOLA leaders have followed all admissions and enrollment policies and procedures when parents selected our schools and students were placed with adequate credits. Even this year, when we sought to decrease our enrollment for 9th grade at Karr, we worked with EnrollNOLA to take into account the best interests of all students to increase our match numbers which could result in an inflation of our 9th grade enrollment yet again. This year alone we have admitted 29 students since October 1, 2017 during the round robin process.

The entire success of ONEAPP and EnrollNOLA is premised on fairness and equity to all who apply. Charter networks, school leaders, parents and EnrollNOLA are all expected to play by the rules and accept the results of a process that is being applied evenly to all participants. Invariably, the process results in many parents and students being happy with their placements, while others are disappointed in their results. Those disappointed parents often reach out to us – through InspireNOLA central office, through our school leadership, through our board – to express their frustration with the results obtained. We do our best to explain that there are only a set amount of seats per grade and that the students for those seats are selected in a way that is fair to all. It is most difficult to explain the fairness of the process to those parents who already have a child in an InspireNOLA school, but who were not able to secure a seat for the child's brother or sister – even in that difficult situation, we stand by the ONEAPP process and defend its results.

The circumstances surrounding the placement of student [REDACTED] at Alice Harte Charter School undermine the fairness and equity of the ONEAPP and EnrollNOLA process. It is my understanding that the parent of this student applied for a seat for this student at Harte in round 1 of the process; the child did not receive a placement at Harte at that time. In addition to this particular student, numerous other children did not receive a placement at Harte, including many siblings of current Harte students. It is my



understanding that the parent in question then sought to obtain a seat at Harte through a round robin, purposely seeking to circumvent the results of round 1. How can InspireNOLA be asked to tell all the other parents who hoped their children would be placed at Harte, played by the rules and were not able to obtain a placement that there are no more seats available at Harte, and then proceed to admit the student in question? Our parents are aware of the situation and admitting the student will only provide evidence of a "rigged" and "inequitable" system.

We support the intended purpose of EnrollNOLA and ONEAPP and the leadership of EnrollNOLA; it is exactly for this reason that we do not and cannot agree to the mandate being placed on InspireNOLA that apparently triggered the Notice of Non-Compliance Letter I received on May 8th.

I have personally met with members of your staff to raise this issue and have attempted to bring about a resolution. I am also concerned about the effect of school closures on the placement of students and have brought up that issue as well. Being compelled to follow policies and procedures that are not in the best interests of New Orleans students is unacceptable -- being compelled to blindly follow policies and procedures that could undermine the public confidence in a process that can only exist and succeed if the community trusts its fairness and equity is unconscionable. As an OPSB operator and advocate I am also disheartened at the language used in the OPSB letter of Does not meet standard and Fails far below when we have admitted 29 students since October 1, 2016 in the ONEAPP process. Is this what OPSB considers as nonacceptable?

I ask that you intervene to take or cause the following actions:

- consider revoking OPSB's Notice of Non-Compliance to InspireNOLA,
- revoke EnrollNOLA's notice of Enrollment Policy Violation to InspireNOLA,
- consider the language being used in this letter since we have accepted 29 students since October in the Round Robin process
- identify an appropriate school site to meet the student's right to a public education, and
- engage the appropriate stakeholders to address and correct this loophole in EnrollNOLA/ONEAPP's policies and procedures.

It is my hope that we can promptly resolve this matter. InspireNOLA is humbled by the numerous parents who select our schools and tries to provide quality seats every year. Today, we are trying to protect the system and stop a negative rumor that is spreading amongst our community regarding admission through the round robin system. We ask for your consideration.

Thank you for your consideration in advance.

Sincerely with gratitude,



Jamar McKneely