Factual Response to the April 22, 2016
St. Louis Public Schools Special Administrative Board (SAB)
Letter to the Community

On April 22, 2016 the St. Louis Public Schools Special Administrative Board (SLPS SAB) released a letter to the community


In order to ensure 100% transparency with the St. Louis Community we provide clarification with fact to several of the statements within the letter. The following information is organized with each SAB statement followed by factual clarification.

SLPS SAB:
“The State agreed in the 1999 Desegregation Settlement Agreement that SLPS would receive funding that included a local sales tax – the Desegregation Sales Tax - approved by St. Louis City voters for SLPS to pay for desegregation remediation programs operated by SLPS. These programs include early childhood education, full day kindergarten, summer schools, magnet schools, vocational education and capital improvements to buildings.”

FACTS:
SLPS was found to have segregated the public school system and as the defendant in Liddell v St. Louis engaged in settlement talks. The Settlement Agreement was outlined in 1997, and put into legislation in 1998 and finalized in the court in 1999. Senate Bill 781, the legislation that enabled the Settlement Agreement is the law that allows charter schools.

SLPS SAB:
“However, beginning in 2006, the State began redirecting significant portions of that Desegregation Sales Tax.”

FACTS:
The first charter schools in St. Louis opened in 2000. From 2000 to 2006 charter schools in St. Louis were required to receive their funding directly from St. Louis Public Schools. It was St. Louis Public School’s determination of how local effort was calculated and they elected to not include the ‘Desegregation Sales Tax’ dollars.

In 2014, the court found that SLPS failed to provide two of the original St. Louis charter schools full funding of the education dollars the charter school children were entitled to receive between 2000 and 2006.
SLPS SAB:
“The legal action being taken has been characterized in the press and on social media as a dispute between SLPS and charter schools. Simply stated, that is not the case.”

FACTS:
The action by SLPS was fully controlled by SLPS. SLPS and the SAB are well aware of the results of the court cases from illegally withholding money from charters. State law MoR.S.160.415.2(3) requires any overpayment made to charter schools to be paid back in 12 months the following year. If SLPS prevails, there is NO OTHER COURSE OF ACTION the State can take but to:

A. Reduce the per student payment to charter schools by approximately $800 per student (10% of a charter school’s budget).
B. Return $42M by withholding over 12 months the total received by each charter school since 2006.

SLPS SAB:
“The District’s stance on partnerships and relationships with charter schools remains unchanged. We remain focused on creating great options for the young people of our community.”

FACTS:
Charter schools are great options for young people of our community. This action threatens the education of over 10,500 charter public school students and their families. The district’s stance on charter schools cannot remain “unchanged” unless their stance all along has been to eliminate charter schools, to provide charter school students with fewer resources or to tell 1/3 of the St. Louis families in public schools that their children deserve less.

SLPS SAB:
“While the timing of the public announcement of the motion being filed on the heels of the successful passage of Proposition 1 is unfortunate, the actual legal proceedings have been in motion for quite some time.”

FACTS:
If the legal proceedings have been in motion for “quite some time” this was not shared with the public nor charter public schools until after Proposition 1 had passed.
Timeline -

• **December 15, 2015**: SLPS contracts with campaign staff (Charlene Jones) for April 5th ballot. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **January 21, 2016**: SLPS Superintendent meets (at his request) with charter public school representation to discuss charter public school support of Proposition 1. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **January 26, 2016**: The SLPS SAB convenes an emergency teleconference to vote to place Proposition 1 on the ballot. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **January 26, 2016**: files ballot language with the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners on Proposition 1. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **January 28, 2016**: The District submitted a demand letter to the Missouri Attorney General’s Office and Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on. In the letter it states, “we are requesting a meeting to discuss resolution of this matter take place no later than Monday, February 15, 2016. After that date it is our intention to place this matter before the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Missouri.” 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

**February 4, 2016**: SLPS Superintendent meets (at his request) with charter public school representation to continue discussion of charter public school support of Proposition 1. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **February 15, 2016**: The District meets with representatives from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Attorney General’s Office. 
  
  **NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

• **March 4, 2016**: The District received correspondence from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education referring to a meeting on February 15, 2016 (including representation from the Missouri Attorney General’s Office) and stating, “we believe that the
State of Missouri is distributing funds in accordance with the Court’s approved Desegregation Settlement Agreement and Missouri state statutes.”

NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS

March 7, 2016: SLPS Superintendent meets (at his request) with charter public school representation to continue discussion of charter public school support of Proposition 1. NO COMMUNICATION REGARDING ‘DESEGREGATION SALES TAX’ CONCERNS WITH CHARTER SCHOOLS

• March 8, 2016 – April 5, 2016: The charter public schools in St. Louis ACTIVELY campaign for the tax levy increase.

• April 5, 2016: St. Louis Public Schools passes a tax levy increase bringing an estimated $27 million dollars to the District.

• April 11, 2016: St. Louis Public Schools files a Motion to Enforce holding the State in contempt, claiming MO DESE, since 2006, has overpaid the charter schools in St. Louis by including the ‘desegregation’ sales tax within the local effort payment that is deducted from the SLPS state payment.

SLPS SAB:
“Remember, Proposition 1 will benefit all public school children in St. Louis, both charter and SLPS students, and has no connection to the legal action being taken against the State.”

FACTS:
• For SLPS the benefit of an additional 27 million dollars per year will begin in 2016.
• For the charter public schools in St. Louis the benefit of an additional 7 million dollars will not occur until 2018.
• Because of this delay, SLPS will receive 7 million dollars per year to their budget that should go to charter schools.