



**Office of the Mayor  
The City of Harrisburg**

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Eric Papenfuse  
*Mayor*

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April 24, 2014

The Honorable Carolyn C. Dumaresq  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Secretary Dumaresq,

I am writing to express my concern that on Monday night major changes were made to the Harrisburg School District Recovery Plan without an opportunity for informed public discussion. When the initial recovery plan was adopted last year, Chief Recovery Officer Gene Veno wrote "success is only possible if parents, educators and community leaders work as partners." An open and transparent process is clearly necessary for the success of the recovery plan, and the actions taken quietly and without sufficient public notice and debate on Monday night raise significant questions regarding the plan's future success.

Most concerning is the admission in the amended Recovery Plan that "the district has not achieved several critical academic goals of the original plan" and that the academic performance benchmarks should change. The original plan was characterized as a "failsafe plan to protect district students...if the required performance goals are not achieved." What value is this promise if the plan's academic goals can be watered down and amended so easily and without public input? The amended plan's performance benchmarks are based on the school performance profile – a significant change which now has the expectation of meeting only 70 percent of this annual requirement in 2013-2014 and 85 percent in 2014-2015.

I respectfully request that your office recognize the importance of having a full public vetting of the changes in the amended recovery plan and, in that spirit, am releasing this letter publicly.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Papenfuse  
Mayor