

It is not surprising to education professionals that Renaissance 2010 has not lived up to the hype and promotion.

Everyone wants schools to succeed and no one wants that more than the educators in the classroom.

But closing schools, removing highly qualified and certified teachers in the name of 'educational opportunities' is just wrong.

We agree that the district should be fiscally prudent in looking at operational costs of keeping schools open that are in disrepair and are not conducive learning environments.

But we strongly oppose the turnaround model of removing the staff and adults who have long-standing relationships with students, families and the community.

Relationships with trusted teachers and staff are key to the emotional wellbeing of students as stated in the October 2009 Consortium Report.

We are particularly disappointed to hear of the suggested turnaround of Deneen and Gillespie and the consolidation of Mollison with Wells and McCorkle with Beethoven as four of these schools are part of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

The CTU's Recording Secretary Mary McGuire will address those concerns.

Ron you have stated CPS will evaluate the testimony provided at public hearings before making a final recommendation to the Board.

We have been told Board members will attend the hearings as we've requested for years to hear first-hand testimony of those affected by your recommendations. I'm glad to know that will occur.

The CTU has consistently opposed the idea of shifting students and closing schools as a means to improving them. We believe closing schools and displacing students and staff is not the answer.

As professional educators we know, research has shown, that smaller classes lead to improved student achievement.

Combining schools and students may lead to overcrowding, and has shown to weaken the progress of the receiving schools.

Our solution:

1. Do an independent study on why these schools are failing;
2. Treat these schools like a student with an IEP...an individualized school plan.

3. Look at what works and look at what is impacting these teachers like high mobility rates of our students.
4. Work with us. We have found that collaboration efforts with the board have worked well in both are TAP and Fresh Start Schools.

As President of my 32,000-member Union, I express everyone's deep concerns about the students, teachers and communities who will be, and have been, adversely affected by these changes.

CPS must consult with the educators and other stakeholders affected in order to minimize or eliminate the adverse affects of these proposed changes.

Collaboration between educators and management is essential for any reform model to succeed.