

Comments to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on the Worcester charter school proposal

February 28, 2023

Max Page

Good morning.

I am Max Page, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, representing 115,000 public school and college educators, including the 3,100 members of the Educational Association of Worcester, our largest K-12 local.

In 2016, the MTA led a campaign to defeat the national and local right-wing's effort to privatize the finest public education system in the nation. We crushed them 62 to 38. How? By drawing on the deep commitment to publicly funded, democratically run public schools.

In 2019, the MTA led a campaign to pass the Student Opportunity Act, ultimately adding \$1.5 billion annually in funds for our public schools. We fought to make sure that the districts most systematically suffering from a lack of resources received the lion's share of the funds. Worcester students and schools deserve all of those funds, and more, to take major steps forward to equalize a starkly unequal education system.

And this past fall, we and our broad coalition delivered to you and the public schools and colleges of Massachusetts the Fair Share Amendment, which will bring in upwards of \$2 billion a year, every single year.

We did not win these landmark victories so that this Board could siphon \$7 million from the real public schools of Worcester to fund an unnecessary, ill-conceived money-grab by a private organization interested in "reliable revenue streams." This proposal is a fundraising gimmick cloaked in the guise of a school. This is why every single elected official, the school committee, the city council, the superintendent, students, parents, and our union of educators who teach, nurture, and lift up our students are all opposed to this charter.

The Baker years are over. I ask that you show respect for the will of the voters and the clear view of the community of Worcester, and vote down this charter.