

JEA P. STREET  
COUNCILMAN, TENTH DISTRICT



COUNCIL

September 21, 2009

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Mr. George Evans, Esquire  
President  
Christina School District  
600 N. Lombard Street  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Mr. Evans,

I have enclosed for your information and review a copy of suspension reports developed by me from the Delaware Department of Education School Profiles and the 1995/1996 Court Order reports. Regrettably, I find the reports to be disastrous and I am gravely concerned about the impact of the District's disciplinary policies and practices on City and minority children.

The reports clearly show that there was a **106%** increase in out of school suspensions in the Christina School District from the 2007/2008 school year and the 2008/2009 school year. Worse, the reports show that there has been a **313 %** increase in out of school suspensions within the District since the Court Order was lifted in 1995. This is especially significant when one considers the fact that the District's enrollment has declined by approximately 3,000 students over this same period of time.

It appears that the impact of the **Charter School Act** and the **Neighborhood School Act** have resulted in total resegregation of the all the District's schools within the City of Wilmington and at the same time, there is disparate discipline within the City schools that is having an obvious **detrimental impact on the Academic Performance of City children**. The harsh fact of the matter is that all of the District's Elementary schools within the City are under academic watch or academic review and only one of the Districts suburban elementary schools is under academic review. The other suburban elementary schools are rated either superior or commendable. This cannot and will not be tolerated.

The discipline data speaks volumes about the disparate treatment of City children. The District has four elementary schools within the City and thirteen elementary schools within its suburban areas. However, the four city schools comprise **64% of the elementary school suspensions, 63% of the elementary school expulsions and 69% of the number of days elementary school students were suspended out of school.** Again, this disparate treatment cannot and will not be tolerated.

The disparity at the Middle School level at Bayard School is simply outrageous. There were **3,555 out of school suspensions at Bayard representing 40% of the total number of suspensions within the District's four Middle Schools.** Worse, **83%** of all the students at Bayard were suspended at least once. This is unconsciously absurd and immediate relief is warranted and hereby requested.

It is crystal clear to me that there is a critical need for the District to take immediate action to address the disparate treatment of inner City children that has resulted in academic disaster for them. I believe that some of those actions items should include:

1. Additional resources for the high poverty segregated schools that the District established under the Neighborhood Schools Acts. Specially, provide all of the items in the attached "Street Sixteen", 15 of which were recommended by the Wilmington Neighborhood School Committee.
2. Immediately implement specific programs and activities that reduce and provide alternatives to out of School suspensions.
3. Terminate school administrators and other District employees who have displayed disdain and a pervasive mean spirit toward City children and children of color.
4. The Superintendent and the Board should review discipline and individual school performances at least monthly.

I am hereby requesting that you inform me of the specific actions the District will take to address the concerns set forth above.

Finally, under the Freedom of Information Act, I hereby request that the suspension and expulsion data set forth in the Delaware Department of Education's School Profiles for the Christiana School District be provided to me by school, race and gender.

I await your response.

Sincerely,

  
Jea P. Street, Councilman  
New Castle County Council  
District 10

Pc: Honorable Jack Markell, Governor  
Honorable Matthew Denn, Lieutenant Governor  
All Members of the Delaware General Assembly  
Dr. Lillian Lowery, Secretary of Education  
Honorable Christopher Coons, County Executive  
Honorable James M. Baker, Mayor  
All Members of New Castle County Council  
All Members of Wilmington City Council  
All Members of the Christina School Board of Education  
All Member of the Delaware Black Caucus

## **Order of Attachments**

1. a. 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 Suspension Report Comparison
- b. 2008/2009 Suspension Report for all Districts
- c. 2008/2009 Suspension Report for Christina School District Elementary School
- d. 2008/2009 Suspension Report for Christina School District Middle Schools
2. 1995/1996 Suspension and Expulsion Report Compared to 2008/2009
3. "Street Sixteen"

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*Attachment – 1.a*

2007/2008 and 2009/2009 Comparison of Suspensions and Expulsions in the Four School Districts Formerly Under  
Federal Court Supervision

	2007/2008	2008/2009	* Change
	Suspensions	Suspensions	
Brandywine	4,229	5,421	+28%
Christina	9,203	19,017	+106%
Colonial	3,242	7,503	+131%
Red Clay	8,403	9,183	+9%
Total	25,077	41,124	+63%

	2007/2008	2008/2009	Change
	Expulsions	Expulsions	
Brandywine	14	10	-28%
Christina	48	80	+66%
Colonial	25	21	-16%
Red Clay	26	3	-88%
Total	113	114	-0-

Source-School Profiles – Information extrapolated and presented by Jea P. Street

\* Percentages Rounded Down

***Attachment – 1.b***

**2008/2009 School Year Suspensions and Expulsions within the Four School Districts Formerly Under Federal Court Supervision as Compared to the State Of Delaware**

	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Suspensions</b>	<b>Expulsions</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Unduplicated</b>
State of Delaware	125,430	70,930	172	147,392	22,828

	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Suspensions</b>	<b>Expulsions</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Unduplicated</b>
Brandywine	10,217	5,421	10	9,082	1,905
Christina	17,200	19,017	80	43,701	4,758
Colonial	10,465	7,503	21	18,027	2,465
Red Clay	15,709	9,183	3	16,087	3,051
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,591</b>	<b>41,124</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>86,897</b>	<b>12,179</b>
<b>From 2008/2009 *Percentage</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>53%</b>

**Source-School Profiles Delaware Department of Education – Excerpts done by Jea P. Street  
\*Percentages Rounded Down**



*Attachment – 1.c*

Christiana School District Elementary Schools

	# of Suspensions	# of Expulsion	# of Day	School Crime Offense	DOE Offenses	% Suspended Expelled	School Rating
District Elementary Total	3,895	11	7,652	109	1,838		
City Schools							
Bancroft	754	2	1,519	18	433	58%	
Elbert Palmer	540	0	659	12	198	51.61	Academic Watch
Pulaski	311	4	1,244	15	249	23.58	Academic Watch
Stubbs	923	1	1,886	16	365	56.98	Academic Watch
City Total	2,528	7	5,308	61	1,245		
% City	64%	63%	69%	55%	67%		
Suburban Schools							
Brader	169	0	235	12	93	12%	Superior
Brookside	88	0	137	0	23	11%	Commendable
Downes	38	0	47	1	18	3%	Superior
Gallaher	151	1	373	1	48	11%	Superior
Jones	177	1	286	16	73	18%	Commendable
Keene	160	0	213	5	37	11%	Academic Review
Leasure	192	0	219	3	147	17%	Superior
MaClary	59	0	74	4	21	9%	Superior
Marshall	110	0	130	3	49	9%	Superior
McVey	43	1	244	2	26	4%	Superior
Smith	43	1	229	1	1	6%	Superior
West Park Place	34	0	34	0	25	7%	Superior
Wilson	104	0	123	0	32	9%	Superior
Total Suburban	1,368	4	2,344	48	593		

\*Source-School Profiles Delaware Department of Education – Excerpts done by Jea P. Street

*Attachment – 1.d*

**Christina School District Middle Schools**

<b>City School</b>	<b># of Suspensions</b>	<b># of Expulsions</b>	<b># of Days</b>	<b>School Crime Offenses</b>	<b>DOE Offenses</b>	<b>% Suspended Expelled</b>	<b>School Rating</b>
<b>City Bayard</b>	3,555	7	8,816	74	628	83%	Not Rated
<b>Gauger Cobbs</b>	1,484	8	3,477	18	268	35%	Academic Progress
<b>Kirk</b>	1,208	5	2,790	22	228	34%	Academic Watch
<b>Shue-Medill</b>	2,527	2	3,772	10	343	52%	Academic Watch
<b>Middle School Total</b>	8,774	22	18,855	124	1,467		
<b>* City %</b>	40%	31%	46%	59%	42%		

**Source-School Profiles Delaware Department of Education – Excerpts done by Jea P. Street**

**\* Percentages Rounded Down**

## *Attachment - 2*

1995/1996 and 2008/2009 Comparison of Suspensions and Expulsions in the Four School Districts Formerly Under  
Federal Court Supervision

	1995/1996	2008/2009	* Change
	Suspensions	Suspensions	
<b>Brandywine</b>	2,637	5,421	+105%
<b>Christina</b>	4,602	19,017	+313%
<b>Colonial</b>	3,506	7,503	+114%
<b>Red Clay</b>	3,193	9,183	+188%
<b>Total</b>	13,938	41,124	+195%

	2007/2008	2008/2009	Change
	Expulsions	Expulsions	
<b>Brandywine</b>	8	10	+25%
<b>Christina</b>	15	80	+433%
<b>Colonial</b>	61	21	-66%
<b>Red Clay</b>	4	3	-25%
<b>Total</b>	88	114	+30%

Sources-School Profiles and 1995/1996 Court Ordered Reports Information extrapolated and presented by Jea P. Street

\*Percentages Rounded Down

# *Attachment - 3*

# **“STREET SIXTEEN”**

- \*1. Expansion of Early Childhood Education Services for Low Income Children
2. All Day kindergarten within Elementary Schools
3. Math Specialists
4. Reading Specialists
5. Reduced Class Sizes
- \*6. Health and Wellness Services to include Mental Health Services within the schools
7. Social workers within the schools
8. Opportunity for extended school days and weeks
9. Opportunity for extended school year
10. Teacher Compensation Incentives
11. Parent Resource Centers
12. Parent Training
13. Parent Decision Making
14. State of the Art Technology and access to technology for all Low Income students
15. External independent oversight for monitoring and evaluation of Low Income Schools
- \*16. Make intentional efforts to reduce suspensions and expulsions
  - a) Develop behavior modification programs for students suspended two or more times
  - b) Institute behavioral interventionist positions or a formula commensurate with the student body within all elementary, middle and high schools

**\*REVISED April 3, 2009\***