[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR ADDRESS]

[DATE]

[RECIPIENT NAME AND ADDRESS]

Dear [RECIPIENT],

We are writing to you as passionate educators who care greatly for our students' development and success. In light of the growing movement for Black lives, direct actions need to be taken to ensure our students' well-being and education. We demand a moratorium on school closures in [YOUR CITY].

The United States has closed between 1000 and 2000 schools every year since the 2000-2001 school year. That’s 24,991 schools in 20 years. 3,790,735 students have been displaced from their school due to school closures. 2,927 (12%) of the total closed schools were charter schools.

[DETAILS ABOUT YOUR CITY: DC EXAMPLE] In DC, under-enrollment is cited as the reason for closing schools, but the D.C. public school student population has increased from 75,000 to 92,000 from 2010 to 2016. D.C. has the highest percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools (43%).

In both charters and traditional public schools, equally low-performing schools were more likely to close if the population had a majority of poor black and brown students. School closures increase student displacement: students who leave a closing school are more likely to transfer schools again in the following years. Students who move around to equally-low performing schools do not show growth. The majority of students who leave before the official end of the school year exhibit worse performance than their peers who are able to stay until the end of the school year at their not-at-risk school. Another major problem for our transient and at-risk students are that transcripts and IEPs/504s are not transferred in a timely fashion, which means they don’t receive services. In addition, there is the harmful loss of community due to breaking up not only the building fixtures, but also staff and generational attachment to a school community. [SPECIFIC ABOUT YOUR CITY: DC EXAMPLE:] This is reflected in the recent closure of Washington Met, which was so underfunded as to be missing arts programs and extracurriculars. Rather than address those issues in funding, the school was shut down.

Charter school closure is an overhanging threat meant to motivate teachers and administrators to make improvements from the same resources they have always had. While closures are not explicitly based on academic performance, the metrics used to close schools correlate closely with low academic achievement, such as declining enrollment over 5 years, projected future neighborhood population, building conditions, and feasibility of relocating students to neighborhood schools. All of these metrics are related to the opportunity gap seen in American schools today.

School closures simply cannot be used to address inequities in schools. Instead, we need to investigate and rectify any funding or resource inequities that could be contributing to under-enrollment. We need to create a district-wide framework that [YOUR PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEMS] use to evaluate and support schools. Next, we need to schedule timely and convenient public hearings to take input from the school community (teachers, parents, students, neighbors) when considering major alterations to schools. Lastly, we also need to give equal weight to parent and student satisfaction data, site visits and the input of families when evaluating quality

We demand a moratorium on school closures immediately. These demands are relevant to all public school districts within our country, and we, as local educators, hope that you will be the governing body that takes the lead in instituting these changes.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]