



Public Schools of Plainfield New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement

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PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPPOSE NEW CHARTER SCHOOL

This is the second time this charter school attempts to gain approval

Plainfield, NJ- April 15 2019– Plainfield Public Schools’ Interim Superintendent Ronald E. Bolandi recommended today that the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Lamont Repollet, deny the application for a proposed vocational high school by the Vocational Technical Regional Charter High School (VTRCHS). This is the second time VTRCHS has filed an application for a charter school in Plainfield.

In a letter to the Commissioner, Bolandi expressed concerns over the application by VTRCHS, citing lack of programs, flawed and inaccurate documentation, and the enormous financial burden this would represent to the district.

Bolandi said the district has state-of-the-art newly renovated and equipped buildings to provide vocational programs and state-of-the-arts STEM lab that opened this school year.

“We offer the following vocational courses at Plainfield High School: Robotics, Environmental Science, Wood Technology, Allied Health and Cisco. The Board of Education is also reviewing a potential referendum to bring back Automotive, Cosmetology, Drafting and other vocational programs to the high school.”

Bolandi said, “I question the definition of vocational education, which the VTRCHS seems to believe is a computer program, surrounded by educational jargon. A true vocational program, especially the one that Plainfield’s students need, is based on a job-results program such as cosmetology, auto shop, metal shop, wood shop, drafting, dental and medical assistants. Plainfield already has an extensive computer education program and does not need to have another school dealing with computer education.”

Bolandi said he has the support of the Board of Education and the public who have voiced their thoughts to him publicly and privately against the VTRCHS.

The VTRCHS estimates an enrollment of 240 students the first year, with an eventual increase to 450 who will be enrolled in the charter school.

Bolandi said if the district loses 240 students this would be a loss of approximately \$10,000 per student, a loss of \$2.4 million, reductions in technology, curriculum and instruction and cuts of

approximately 20 staff members. When the enrollment at VTRCHS reaches 450 students, it would mean cuts of and additional \$4.5 million from the Plainfield school budget and 40 staff members.

There are five existing charter schools which cost the Plainfield School District approximately \$28 million per year. In addition to the previous loss of \$62 million in state aid. Further reductions would mean reductions in reading instruction, guidance services, library services, world language instruction, after school and summer programs among many other cuts, which target the at-risk student population.

Bolandi concluded, "With the loss of state aid over the years and the continuing growth of charter schools, Plainfield will never stop the bleeding and be able to provide quality education for the students that remain."

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