

Community rallies to save Urban League Academy

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.
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Despite the pleas of several current and former students of the Urban League Academy – a Minneapolis contract alternative school – a divided school board voted to give the school a one-year provisional contract, placing the school's future in jeopardy.

Alongside the students were teachers, faculty, Minneapolis Urban League board members and other concerned citizens who urged the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) board to extend the school's contract to three years, which the board did for other contract schools. But at the behest of the district's superintendent, Dr. Bernadeia Johnson, the board ignored the pleas and voted 5 – 4 to only offer the one-year provisional contract as opposed to a proposed two-year compromise suggested by MPS board director, Mohamud Noor. And while the board members and faculty of the Urban League said they welcome the opportunity to meet – and exceed – measured student goals, they reject the notion that one year is enough time to judge the academy's progress, especially considering the district has yet to fully define its measurable standards.

Board member Tracine Asberry agreed with the assessment of the school's supporters.

"I do not see one year as a real and reasonable time to turn around a school where in some cases the students are four years behind (when they enter the school)," said Asberry.

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