



DERRICK THOMAS ACADEMY

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enter search keywords.


[Home](#)
[Academy](#)
[Parents](#)
[Students](#)
[Social](#)

Clarification of Media Coverage

Dear Parents,

Over the past 24 hours local media outlets have been reporting on a recent legal decision regarding funding disputes between the Kansas City Missouri School District and fourteen Public Charter Schools in Kansas City. Several of these reports have highlighted Derrick Thomas Academy's involvement in the lawsuit. Unfortunately, **several statements in those reports were inaccurate or misleading**. In at least one report it was implied that DTA was on the verge of financial collapse and at risk of shutting down. This is not accurate and couldn't be further from the truth. To help you understand exactly what has happened I have listed a brief summary below. Thank you for your understanding and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

So, what happened?

- Kansas City School District (KCMSD) receives extra taxpayer money from a Desegregation Bond. This extra money accounts for about \$800 per student and is specifically designed to help the schools fix the problems created by segregation and unequal funding for students attending public school in the KCMSD boundaries.
- KCMSD refused to give this extra money to the charter schools despite the fact that public charter schools are serving students from the KCMSD boundaries and should receive the same rights as all students in the district.
- In 2005, the Board of Fund Commissioners decided KCMSD had to send the money to the charter schools. The state paid the Desegregation Bond money to the charter schools for 13 months. KCMSD sued the charter schools and the State. The State Courts agreed that charter school students should receive the Desegregation Bond payments.
- After losing in State Court, KCMSD brought the same lawsuit in Federal Court and in addition to withholding the \$800 per student, they asked that the money sent to charter schools be returned. (In DTA's case, this was about \$800,000.) The Federal Court decided that yes, KCMSD could stop paying the money to the Charter Schools, but no, they cannot take back the money that was already given.
- Not satisfied with that, KCMSD sued again asking that the state pay the money back. This lawsuit was finally heard by a judge in 2010 and he made his decision late last Friday evening. His decision is strange. He decided that, yes, the Charter Schools have to pay the money back AND he said that we have to pay an unreasonable 9% interest rate on the money we have held since 2005. (In DTA's case this is about \$375,000).

So, what does this mean for DTA?

- DTA was smart and did not spend one penny of the \$800,000 that we received. We wanted to hold on to that money until all legal disputes were resolved. If we had to write a check for that amount we could do so today.
- DTA and the 13 other charter schools are meeting with our attorneys in two weeks to review the full ruling and determine our reaction. We have until the end of September to decide what actions we will take. As soon as we have our plan in place we will communicate it to everyone.
- DTA is in a very good financial position, even though for 9 of the 10 years our school has been operating we receive about \$800 less per student than KCMSD. Furthermore, we have extra expenses that KCMSD doesn't have, such as paying the mortgage of our building. Despite the disparity in funding we outperformed the school district in Math and are continuing to provide a safe, stable, nurturing learning environment for our students.

So, what does this mean for our Students and Parents?

- Our students do not have access to equal funding. The \$800 per student means our school has about \$800,000 less per year than we should. If we had that money we could add almost 15 more teachers for our students or we could more than double the amount of computers available to our students - every year!
- DTA students do not have access to school buildings paid for by our students' parents yet left vacant due to the downsizing of the district. Schools bought and paid for by parents are left vacant while 8,000 students attend charter schools in Kansas City and are not permitted to occupy those buildings.
- DTA is in good financial standing and, despite speculations by the media, this legal decision does not put us in jeopardy of closing in financial ruin.

As always, thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with your young scholars. At DTA we are teaching our scholars to be Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow.

Yours in Education,

DTA Administrators and the Board of Directors