

## An Open Letter to Our Administration:

We announce today that we, the Educators and Staff of the Franklinton Preparatory Academy, have made the collective and historic decision to form our own union, the Franklinton Preparatory Academy Educators Association (FPAEA). Our new union will be affiliated with the 121,000 education professionals of the Ohio Education Association and the 3 million education professionals of the National Education Association. Today we will file authorization cards with the National Labor Relations Board representing the overwhelming majority of our educators and non-management staff, triggering a representation election to certify FPAEA as our bargaining agent.

The decision to become the first unionized charter school in central Ohio was not taken lightly. We are, above all, dedicated to the mission of our school, the premise that “all students, irrespective of differences, can learn at high levels and graduate from high school.” In fact, it is because of this mission that we feel a responsibility as professional advocates to gain a strong collective voice on behalf of our students, our community, and ourselves. As a union, we will advocate for a comprehensive discipline policy, adequate educational resources, and the professional respect we deserve. We want Franklinton Preparatory Academy to be a stable learning environment and a career destination for educators.

In order for FPA to have a safe and stable learning environment, a clear discipline policy that addresses fighting, truancy, and disrespect is needed. We believe that educators should play a central role in forming the school’s discipline policy. Educators have the most experience with the students and know what different students will and will not respond to. A school’s discipline policy is a core pillar of the environment of the school, and input from all affected by the policy: administrators, educators, and students, should lead to a comprehensive and transparent discipline policy. We will advocate for a comprehensive and clear discipline policy that will be decided on democratically.

Educational resources are an important part of every school, and in order to do the best job possible for our students and administrators we need certain items. These items include textbooks, manipulatives, a fully stocked school library with both fiction and non-fiction books, and videos, just to name a few. Students need books in order to cement their understanding, and to improve their reading skills. They need manipulatives to increase both concrete and abstract thinking. The school library should give students, teachers, administrators and parents a wide variety of material that is easily accessible to furthering their understanding and linking it to the subject matter. With our union, we will advocate with one strong collective voice for the resources our students need.

In addition to a comprehensive discipline policy and adequate educational resources, we will also advocate for the professional respect that we deserve. Daily, each of us, regardless of the role we may play, arrives at FPA with shared objectives: to further our students’ educational gains, close the achievement gap that yawns in front of them and play a supportive role in traveling with them towards a future of opportunities instead of regrets. We are intelligent, educated, responsible, compassionate and empathetic professionals who have always been worthy of and now demand professional respect in relation to our ideas, thoughts, plans and ethics in the work of educating these

most vulnerable of children. It was Paulo Freire who wrote, “The educator has the duty of not being neutral”, and it is on this ideal that we, the teachers and staff of FPA stand.

We are looking forward to a mutually respectful and cooperative relationship with FPA administration as we gain recognition and negotiate a first contract. It is not uncommon for employers to attempt to persuade employees against organizing, but we expect our administration to respect our democratic decision to form a union and not engage in such a campaign. Please understand that our decision has been made collectively and will not change. We are committed to our profession, our community, and our union. Our school’s resources should be directed solely towards a quality education for our students.

Our association looks forward to honoring and advancing our school’s mission of building “trusting relationships within and among the members of our learning community.”

Sincerely,

The Franklinton Preparatory Academy Educators Association Organizing Committee

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