

CEP's Response to Issues Raised by ACLU's March 11 Press Release

Issue: Not a single child at the school made it to their senior year in 2006.

Response:

- Seniors are not referred to the program by APS. Set forth below is the enrollment by grade of the 2005-06 school year and the 2006-07 school year:

Grade	School Year 2005-06	School Year 2006-07
Grade 6	141	104
Grade 7	214	173
Grade 8	224	245
Grade 9	318	260
Grade 10	79	84
Grade 11	11	22

- When 11th grade students complete their referral to the CEP program they are referred back to their home school or to Atlanta's West End Academy which is APS' alternative school for junior and seniors.

Issue: The school has a "no homework" policy and also prohibits students from taking supplies home – including books.

Response

- Students referred to CEP are reading and performing math at 3 to 4 years below their grade level of placement. These students typically have been retained one or two years, are not passing courses or earning credits on a pace to graduate and have failed all or parts of the state skills test.
- The program is designed to be an intense classroom experience with a teacher and an aide in every classroom.

The program is delivered as follows:

- Direct instruction for the entire class
- Facilitated instruction for small groups and individual student instruction.
- CEP's curriculum is aligned with State Standards and the Atlanta Public Schools curriculum.

- Students are placed in the same courses as they would be at their home schools.
- Students use the same textbooks as they do in their home schools
- Students are allowed to take homework and their textbooks home.

Issue: AISS-CEP has no cafeteria, no gym and no library;

Response:

- The CEP program is based on education best practices of small learning communities, i.e., school within a school. Each learning community has five classrooms and a large commons area. Breakfast and lunch are served in the commons area.
- There are two recreation areas at the CEP school. There are two recreation periods scheduled weekly for students.
- Each learning community has 24 computers with online capability for students to complete needed research.

Issue: Students are subjected to full body pat-down searches that include even the soles of their feet every day, and all students – both boys and girls – are forced to lift their shirts up to their necks in front of the search team;

Response: This is incorrect. Students are not subjected to a full body pat down search that include even the soles of their feet.

On entry to the school each day students go through a process to ensure safety for all students and staff. The process is similar to the screening process experienced by the traveling public at airports.

- Students remove their shoes and items in their pockets which are screened as in done in an airport screening.
- The student then passes through a metal detector. If the metal detector does not sound an alarm, the screening is completed and the student continues to class. If the metal detector does sound an alarm the student receives an additional screening that includes a pat down as would be completed in airport screening.

- Neither boys nor girls are forced to lift up their shirts to their necks in front of a search team.

Issue: Watches, jewelry, purses, combs, brushes, keys, and money in excess of five dollars are all considered contraband and are strictly prohibited — girls are not permitted even to bring tampons into the building.

Response:

Personal items listed above are collected from students on entry to the building and returned to them at the end of the day. All personal health products needed by students are provided free of charge through the school nurse.

Issue: In 2006-2007, 91.1 percent of students failed to achieve proficiency in math and 65.8 percent failed to achieve proficiency in reading on Georgia's statewide Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests. Fewer than 23 percent of students at the school met or exceeded standards across all subjects, compared to two nearby alternative schools where over 50 percent of students did.

Response:

- The average student referred to CEP in the 2006-07 school year was reading and performing math at the 3rd grade level on entry.
- The average length of placement for students at CEP in the 2006-07 school year was 109 days. For students enrolled 150 days or more the average reading level growth was 3.2 years and the average math level growth was 4 years.
- For students enrolled less than 90 days the average reading level growth was 2.2 years and the average math level growth was 2.8 years. There is no expectation that students performing at 3rd or 4th grade reading and math levels will pass their grade equivalent skills test in an average placement of 109 days. The expectation is that their foundation reading and math skills will improve and the students will make progress toward passing the state skills test and continue to improve as foundational skills reach their grade appropriate level.
- Middle school students enrolled for 150 plus days passed an average of 6.7 courses and high school students earned an average of 5 credits.

Issue: The AISS-CEP School alone accounted for 67.7 percent of all reported incidents of battery, 46 percent of all reported incidents of vandalism, and 20 percent of all reported incidents of gun possession in the district.

Response: This is incorrect.

There were 25,831 disciplinary offenses reported in Atlanta Public Schools during the 2005-06 school year. There were 260 cases of battery, 172 cases of vandalism and 122 cases of weapons reported by APS in the 2005-06 school year.

There were 176 cases of battery reported at CEP. These incidents were improperly coded in the reporting system. Any student incident involving pushing or shoving, altercation or fight was coded as a battery which is incorrect under the state reporting system. This has been corrected.

There were 79 cases of vandalism reported at the CEP campus in 2005-06. These incidents were improperly coded in the reporting system. Any student incident involving marking on a desk, making on a bathroom wall, damage to computers were incorrectly coded as vandalism in the reporting system. This had been corrected.

There were no gun possessions at the CEP campus in 2005-06. Two students brought BB guns to the school, both of which were confiscated during the entry screening process.

Issue: Teachers are inexperienced compared to the teachers in other local alternative schools.

Response:

- There are 20 teachers employed at the CEP school in Atlanta. All are certified.

Issue: CEP's record nationwide is similarly poor.

Response: This is incorrect. Set forth below is a representative sample of results achieved in CEP partnership schools.

Orange County Florida 2006-07:

- CEP had:
 - **Highest percent** of math gains with students in the lowest quartile of achievement
 - **Among the highest** percent of reading gains with students in the lowest quartile of achievement
 - Middle school students passed an average of **6.5 classes** and averaged **1.5 grade promotions** per student.
 - High school students earned an average of **9.7 credits** and averaged **1.8 grade promotions** per student
- During school years 2002-03 thru 2005-06 eighty-three percent (2,160 of 2,613) of previously retained students were promoted to the next grade after an average attendance of 125 days

Richmond, Virginia Results:

- Virginia's **only** disciplinary alternative education school to **make AYP in 2007**.
- Virginia's **only** disciplinary alternative education school to **receive state accreditation**.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Results:

- Temple University concluded in a longitudinal study done in 2005 that data indicate, "relative to the comparison group of students, the former CEP students tend to: (1) remain enrolled in district schools; (2) have higher graduation rates; (3) have higher grade promotion rates and lower retention rates; (4) attend schools more regularly; and (5) have fewer disciplinary infractions."

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