

December 12, 2025

To: Dr. Fateama Fulmore
Dr. Jawan Brown-Alexander

Re: Leah Chase School – Chase Family Members Position in Support of Remaining Open

Dear Dr. Fulmore and Dr. Brown-Alexander,

We write on behalf of members of the Chase Family to formally and respectfully clarify the record and correct misrepresentations regarding the future of the Leah Chase School.

Our family strongly supports the Leah Chase School remaining open as it is currently operating, not merely preserved as a named building or legacy site. Leah Chase's name has never stood for symbolism alone, it represents service, access, dignity, excellence, and deep accountability to the New Orleans community. Reducing her legacy to a building name while removing public stewardship fundamentally misunderstands who she was and what she stood for.

We urge OPSB leadership to recognize that the Leah Chase School is more than a data point or an enrollment figure. It is a living institution with the potential to grow, improve, and serve as a model for what education can be when given equitable resources, time, and commitment. Closing or converting after just one year of operation sends a troubling message about our priorities as a community and whose schools are given grace and whose are not.

The Chase Family stands firmly for investment over disinvestment, public accountability and children over expediency. We respectfully request that OPSB continue to operate the Leah Chase School and engage in transparent, collaborative planning with families, staff, and the broader community to strengthen its academic and operational outcomes.

We reject the assertion that the Leah Chase School is inherently "doomed" or incapable of success. Public schools across the country, particularly those rooted in community, have demonstrated that with intentional investment, leadership stability, and time, improvement is both possible and measurable. To declare failure after a short operational window, especially in a post-pandemic landscape marked by system-wide enrollment shifts, leadership transitions, and staffing challenges, is premature and inequitable.

Further, framing enrollment decline and transitional growing pains as justification for disinvestment overlooks the responsibility of the district and broader ecosystem to support, not abandon, a school bearing such cultural and civic significance. Many schools across Orleans Parish, charter and district alike, have faced enrollment fluctuations, staffing hurdles, and program gaps. These challenges are not unique to the Leah Chase School, nor should they be used to single it out as unworthy of continued district support.

We are also deeply concerned by narratives that reduce education to structural debates rather than centering the responsibility to serve children and communities well. Educating a community

should never be perceived as a challenge to a system or systems. Public education should not be treated as an experiment preserved only when convenient or economically efficient. Leah Chase was a champion for the public good, equity, and access.

Equally troubling is the implication that community advocacy is driven by anything other than a sincere commitment to the well-being of children and families. Many of the families, educators, alumni, and supporters advocating for the Leah Chase School today do so because they firmly believe children deserve a strong, high quality educational environment one grounded in neighborhood accountability and cultural relevance. Their advocacy is driven by principle and responsibility.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the full breadth of voices connected to this important decision.

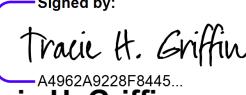
Respectfully,

The Following Members of the Chase Family

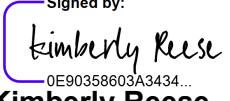
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Stella Chase Reese
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Tracie H. Griffin
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Kimberly Reese
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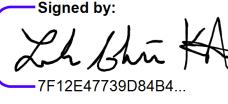
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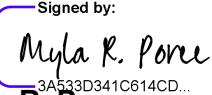
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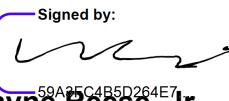
James Haydel, III

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Leah Chase Kamata
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Leah Chase Kamata

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Myla R. Poree
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Wayne Reese, Jr.
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Robert Haydel
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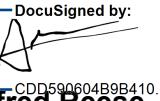
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Eve Marie Haydel
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Alfred Reese
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David Haydel
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