

Defend Catherine Ferguson Academy!

Unite all sections of the working class! Public education is a social right!

Socialist, International Students for Social Equality
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Students, teachers, parents and the working class as a whole must mobilize to reject the closure of Catherine Ferguson Academy.

Catherine Ferguson is a vital resource—one of only four institutions like it in the country—which provides quality education, parenting courses and childcare to pregnant teens and young mothers. Over the last two decades, its dedicated teachers and staff have provided hundreds of young mothers with the opportunity to be educated.

The plan by Emergency Financial Manager Roy Roberts to close or sell off dozens of schools, including CFA, is part of Mayor Bing's effort to shut down whole areas of the city. It is also part of the drive of both Democrats and Republicans to destroy the right to public education for the working class.

Workers in Detroit and the suburbs face the same fight. Libraries and schools are being closed, while workers are losing their jobs and facing wage cuts. Billions are being robbed from the public schools and other social programs in order to provide even more tax cuts to the corporations and the rich.

This cannot stand! The fight to stop the closure of CFA must be the beginning of a struggle to defend the social rights of all working people.

The Socialist Equality Party and International Students for Social Equality call for the immediate formation of a Committee to Defend Catherine Ferguson Academy. This committee must begin with the position that Catherine Ferguson must not be closed. It should discuss the strategy and tactics necessary to keep it open.

As the political and organizational basis for this committee, we propose the following principles:

Education is a social right! Tax the wealthy to fund social programs!

Education is a social right necessary for the development of every individual and society as a whole. By closing CFA, the corporate and political elite is saying to the working class: You have no right to education! You have no right to a secure income and decent life for yourself and your children!

The universal claim by big business politicians and the media is that there is simply “no money” for education and all the other rights of the working class. This is a lie!

After attacking the jobs and living standards of auto workers, GM, Ford and Chrysler have made billions in profits. Corporate executives like Ford's Alan Mulally pocketed \$83 million in compensation last year—more than 30 times the yearly budget for Catherine Ferguson! After receiving trillions of dollars in the bank bailouts from the Bush and Obama administrations, the financial elite is doing better than ever.

There is plenty of money. It is a question of who controls the wealth created by working people and who decides how society's wealth is distributed.

An emergency program to finance public education must include a sharp increase in taxes for corporations and the wealthy. A one-time tax of only 10 percent on the top 1 percent, a modest measure, would make more than \$1.5 trillion available to expand public education throughout the country.

Unite all sections of the working class!

Every section of the working class is under attack—black and white, immigrant and native-born,

whether they live in the city of Detroit or the suburbs. School districts everywhere are shutting down schools, laying off teachers, increasing class sizes, and eliminating programs.

The defense of public education requires the collective mobilization of all workers, throughout Michigan, and indeed across the country.

Workers must reject the racial politics promoted by groups such as BAMN. They claim that closure of CFA is part of a racist campaign against black and Latino students, despite the fact that many of the people leading the attack—including Bobb and Roberts—are African American. The role of groups like BAMN is to prevent a united struggle of the working class and to keep workers chained to the Democratic Party and the social system, capitalism, that it defends. This type of politics, based on race or gender instead of class, has led all workers into a political dead end.

New organizations of the working class are necessary. This includes a struggle to organize teachers independent of and in opposition to the DFT trade union, which has done absolutely nothing to fight against layoffs and school closures, instead enforcing concessions contract after concessions contract. The DFT, as with the official trade unions as a whole, works closely with the Democratic Party and the political establishment to attack workers.

Break with the Democrats and Republicans!

The unification of the working class requires complete independence from the Democratic and Republican parties. Both of these parties represent the corporations and the wealthy. The Democratic Party has controlled Detroit for decades, overseeing the destruction of hundreds of thousands of jobs and the dismantling of the public education system.

On a national level, Obama is now leading a campaign to victimize teachers and attack public education. In March, Education Secretary Arne Duncan declared Detroit “Ground Zero” for his reactionary agenda of school “reform.” He urged the city to emulate New Orleans, where 75 percent of students are now in charter schools.

When the banks and financial swindlers who crashed the economy demanded it, the Obama administration handed them trillions of dollars. When it comes to paying for wars to grab oil and extend the power and

control of US corporations, nothing is too expensive! Now, the federal government is starving the states and localities of funds, while rejecting any government program to address mass unemployment, poverty, and home foreclosures.

Reject the subordination of public education to private profit!

At stake in the fight to defend Catherine Ferguson Academy is the basic principle that every child, regardless of socioeconomic background, has the right to high-quality, free schooling.

To the millionaires and billionaires who control the political and economic system, the resources expended on public education are an intolerable deduction from their potential profits. They are determined to destroy public education and transform what is left into a money-making business.

The principle of public education is in conflict with a society in which everything is organized to meet the needs of the wealthy.

The Socialist Equality Party and International Students for Social Equality are leading a fight to mobilize the working class in the fight for socialism. Socialism means a society in which the economy is controlled democratically, in the interests of social need and not private profit. This is the only way to guarantee the social rights of the working class: for a decent and secure job, a livable income, education and culture, health care, housing and a comfortable retirement.

We urge all students, teachers and workers who want to defend CFA to take immediate steps to form an action committee. Contact the SEP to help organize this fight.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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