



**BLACK
PASTORS
UNITED FOR
EDUCATION**

TO: The Honorable Josh Shapiro, Governor

CC: Honorable Kim Ward, President pro tempore, Pennsylvania Senate
Honorable Joe Pittman, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate
Honorable Jay Costa, Minority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate
Honorable Joanna McClinton, Speaker, Pennsylvania House
Honorable Matthew Bradford, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House
Honorable Bryan Cutler, Minority Leader, Pennsylvania House

DATE: Monday, July 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Lifeline Scholarships

Dear Governor Shapiro,

Black Pastors United for Education is a network of pastors and congregations that strategically partners to educate under-resourced children in non-traditional learning spaces. We, along with our allies in the religious community, advocate for laws and policies that protect educational freedom and opportunities.

As religious leaders, we speak for our congregations and communities who want educational options that best suit the unique needs and desires of our parents, children, and neighborhoods. We believe that every child in Pennsylvania deserves educational options curated to their unique needs and interests. We empower the voices of parents and guardians, as well as community and religious leaders, to tell lawmakers that every child in Pennsylvania should have access to a quality education, regardless of zip code, background, or circumstance.

Consequently, we have three specific requests:

1. Fully and properly fund our public schools. We want to be part of a robust conversation that includes several groups and results in a multi-year strategy and commitment to properly invest, sustain, and secure funding for our public schools. We recognize the need for high-quality traditional public schools.
2. Enact Lifeline Scholarships for children in Pennsylvania's lowest-performing schools. These scholarships open doors, provide access, extend relief, and empower our communities to build schools and education environments that work for our kids.
3. Oppose cuts to public cyber charter schools. In Pennsylvania, public charter schools and cyber charter schools educate and serve a higher percentage of low-income and non-white students than traditional school districts. Our parents are choosing cyber charter schools as the only free alternative educational option for their children.

It is time for Pennsylvania to lead our nation in educational opportunity. We must work intentionally, collaboratively, strategically, and compassionately for our children and our state. We, Black Pastors United for Education and our allies in the religious community, want to build a future that properly cares for every child in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Governor Shapiro, we remember when you told us you wanted to revolutionize education in Pennsylvania. Now is the time to lead us into that future. We urge you to act—to make education a non-partisan issue, boldly dismiss the politics that prevent progress, and comprehensively fund and secure educational freedom and opportunity. We encourage both the Pennsylvania House and Senate to support this effort, advocate for children, and do what is right.

Now is the time for courage. Now is the time for you to lead this effort. We are ready to stand with you in standing up for ALL children!

Sincerely,

FROM:

Listed Alphabetically by Last Name. Affiliations for identification purposes only.

Reverend Joshua C.
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The Rock Church
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Bishop Jayson Davenport
New Life Christian Church
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