



# TSTA NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SAISD education leader questions lack of transparency in charter school selection**

The process by which Superintendent Pedro Martinez negotiated a charter takeover of Stewart Elementary School has heightened concerns among San Antonio ISD employees about the district's future, the leader of the district's teachers' union said today.

"The superintendent's proposal to turn over Stewart Elementary to a New York City-based charter company, Democracy Prep, was developed without public involvement by parents, school employees and other members of the community," said Shelley Potter, president of the San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel.

Although the charter deal was in the works for at least six months, Potter said, "Parents and staff at Stewart were not informed by the superintendent about the proposal until four days before the plan was voted on by the school board."

At tonight's board meeting, Potter will present the union's recommendations for the district's performance agreement with Democracy Prep. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Burnet Center, 406 Barrera St.

In an email to SAISD employees today, Potter also noted:

# Democracy Prep has a reputation for a regressive, overly punitive approach to student behavior. Former teachers have described the charter chain as a "police state interested in teaching students through fear."

# Democracy Prep doesn't have a bilingual program, even though Stewart has a 35-40 percent bilingual student population.

# Stewart teachers who want to continue working at the campus will have to resign from SAISD and be employed by the charter chain. They will become at-will employees who can be terminated at any time without contract protections. High staff turnover can undermine student success.

# Under state law, the management of Stewart could have been turned over to a San Antonio-based institution of higher education, an approach being used in other Texas districts. Instead, Superintendent Martinez continued his long track record of seeking charter management for struggling schools.

Potter said the rush to charters, including reports that the district was considering a proposal to have another charter take over the education of over-age students at Lanier and Highlands High Schools, meant the administration was contracting out its core education responsibility.

“Teachers and staff understand that SAISD jobs are being contracted out to charter companies and that safeguards for students, parents and school employees will be eroded as that occurs,” she said.

Potter’s email to district employees is attached.

Here is what happened when Democracy Prep took over a school in Las Vegas:

[Parents upset over Las Vegas charter school changes](#)