**An Open Letter to the board president of Morris Jeff Community School**

Mr. Bagert,

On February 22nd, 2011, several concerned faculty and parents from the Morris Jeff Community School brought to the attention of the board that several students, primarily special education students, were being subjected to what could be considered abusive or neglectful treatment at the school. Students were being placed in a room, often for long periods of time, and frequently without supervision. The following are some accounts of what occurred from faculty and parents.

* One child was photographed asleep on the floor unattended with the door wide open. At least four adults confirm seeing this child unattended on numerous occasions.
* One child begged to be let out to use the bathroom, was denied access, and urinated on herself.
* Yet another child was taken kicking and screaming by two adults up stairs to the room where another faculty member witnessed one of the adults sit on the child’s legs as a way to restrain her.
* As recently as March 30th, a child was dragged across the floor by the school leader. When the police were called to the school, the investigating officer called child protective services and advised the parent to withdraw her child from the school because he felt that the school was unsafe for her child.
* The parents and guardians of these children have reported that their children have had nightmares and panic attacks as a result of their treatment. Many of these children are now terrified of going to school.

All of these children are five and six years old.

Eight school days after the revelations on Feb. 22, one of the teachers at that meeting was fired for questionable reasons, apparently in retaliation for speaking out. The abrupt departure of the terminated teacher has begun to take a toll on students whose parents report major regressions in their children’s behavior and an increase in stress-related behaviors such as difficulties in controlling their bladders and acting out in class.

Morris Jeff Community School is a public school that has been championed by and is accountable to the citizens of this neighborhood and city. As such we, the concerned citizens and supporters of Morris Jeff Community School, request the following:

1. A full and thorough investigation of these incidents and other allegations of abuse and neglect.
2. A swift and fair hearing for the terminated employee.
3. Appropriate disciplinary action against the individuals found responsible.
4. An apology to the children and parents who were subjected to this unjust treatment.

My signature below is a symbol of my commitment to the fair and equitable treatment of all children in this city. I stand for social justice, and I stand with these children and their advocates.