

Philly 50,000 Kick-off Meeting

Thursday, April 10, 2008 Philadelphia, PA

Organizers:

David Hardy, Boys Latin of Philadelphia Charter School

Laurada Byers, Russell Byers Charter School

Jeanne Allen, The Center for Education Reform – Washington, DC

Kara Hornung, The Center for Education Reform – Washington, DC

Robert Cane, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS) – Washington, DC

James Merriman, NYC Center for Charter School Excellence, New York, NY

Agenda at-a-glance:

- 11:00 am – Welcome & Introductions (*Jeanne Allen*)
– Overview
– Examples from New York City and Washington, DC
- 12:15 pm – Short Break (*Lunch*)
- 12:35 pm – Discussion Resumes
- 1:30 pm – Next Steps
- 2:00 pm – Meeting Adjourns
-

Outline for Next Steps

Define the Purpose and Goals of Philly 50,000

Assessment

- Review/Feedback from School Leaders
 - *What do Philadelphia's Charter Schools Need?*
- Compiling targets, assets and successes

Development of Business Plan

- Organizational Structure
 - Who's on board?*
- Advocacy & Strategic Planning
 - What is the expected outcome of efforts?*
- Timeline
- Budget

Implementation

- Fundraising
- New School Development
- Advocacy strategies

| ATTENDEE | SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION |
|---|---|
| Alfredo Calderon | Antonia Pantoja Charter School |
| Dr. Kountz | Architecture and Design Charter School |
| David Hardy | Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter School |
| Ernest Holiday | Delaware Valley CHS |
| Jackie Kelley, CEO | Discovery Charter School |
| Jerry Santilli | First Philadelphia Charter School for Literacy |
| Jurate Krokys | Independence Charter School |
| Marc Manella | KIPP Philadelphia Charter School |
| Dr. Walter D. Palmer, Founder/ Pres. Plus one associate | Leadership and Learning Partners |
| Dr. Waiters | Maritime Academy Charter School |
| Karen DelGuercio, BOD plus one administrator | MAST Community Charter School |
| David McDonough | Mastery Charter High School – Lenfest |
| Vuong G. Thuy, Headmaster | Multi-Cultural Academy Charter School |
| Patricia Sack, Vice Principal | Preparatory Charter School |
| Wanda Bailey-Green | Renaissance Advantage Charter School |
| Laurada Byers | Russell Byers Charter School |
| Paulette Blackston- Royster | Southwest Leadership Academy |
| John Walker | Universal Institute Charter School |
| Stacey Gill Phillips | West Philadelphia Achievement Charter Elementary School |
| David Kasievich, Director of Development | Young Scholars Charter School |
| Michael Frattone | Kleinbard Bell & Brecker LLP |
| Janine Yass | Susquehanna International Group |

THE Center for Education Reform



Charter School Funding Survey: *Are You Receiving Your Fair Share?*

Dear Charter Friends:

Are you receiving 100% of funding that other public schools receive in your state? Most schools are not. Some people believe this is at odds with state law – and perhaps with federal.

We need your help! If you want to make sure all charter schools get their fair share, we have to give policymakers information that they need to help them understand the problem. There are also some groups who believe we need to litigate. Make your situation and your voice heard. Take a moment to fill this very brief survey out – or pass it on to the appropriate person to do so. It won't take more than 5 minutes to complete.

Please call us with any questions at 800-521-2118, but in the meantime we need your feedback this week! THANK YOU!

Funding Survey

1) Is your charter school receiving the same type and amount of funding as other public schools in your district? (There may be discrepancies based on student population and demographics, but we want to make sure states are obeying charter law and giving charter schools equitable funding.)

2) If no, how do you know the amount is wrong? Can you point to specific examples in your budget or state/district funding formula and explain in detail where there are discrepancies? (i.e. operating dollars, IDEA, Title I, other categories of funds school does not receive that should, "discretionary" monies the district holds, etc.)

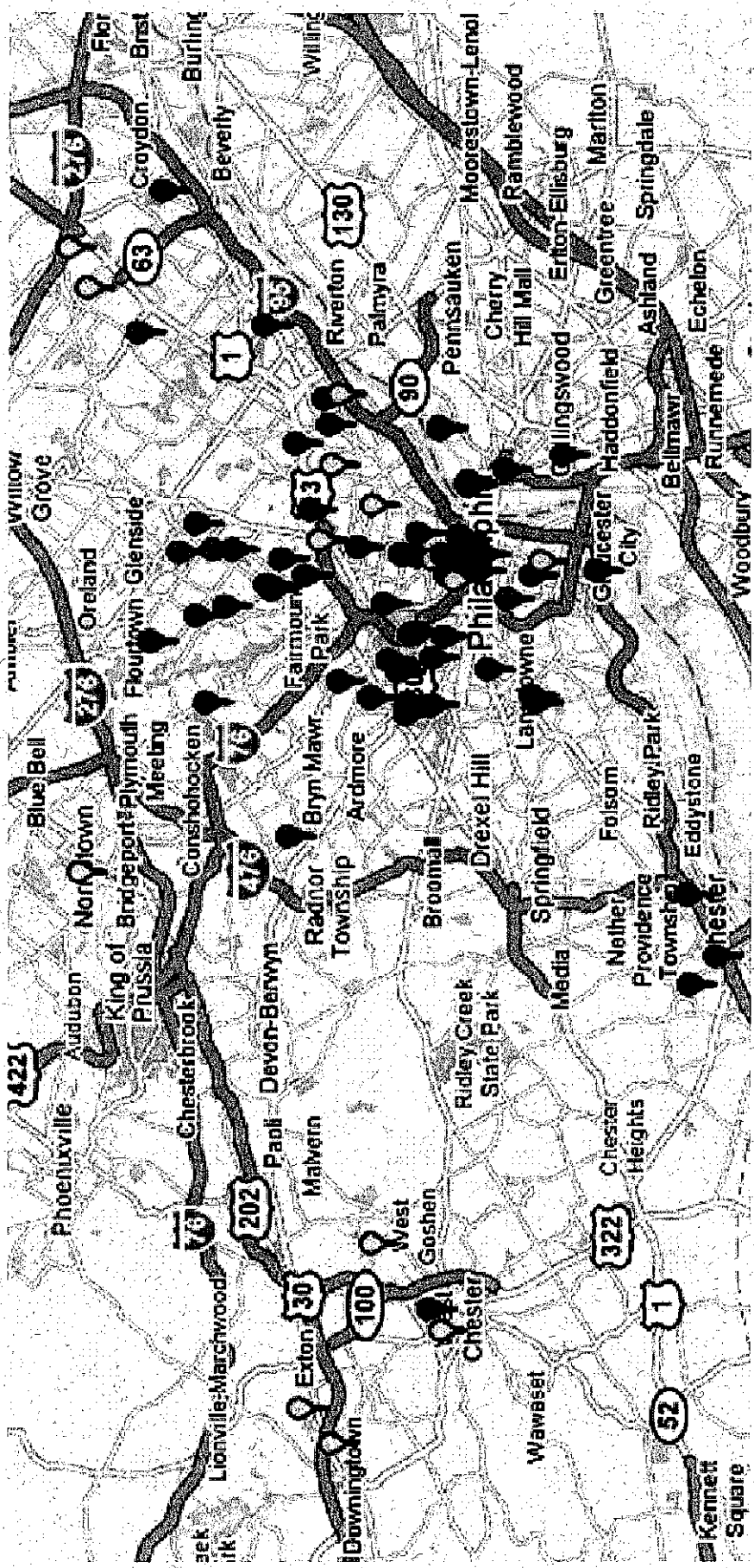
3) How much money does your school receive per pupil? _____

4) Would you be willing to share your story of financial discrimination with CER and others interested in helping you? If aggrieved and the potential for legal action existed, would you be open to filing a lawsuit against your state or the federal government to ensure charters receive equal funding?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey!!!






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APRIL 10, 2008**

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January 30, 2007



THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

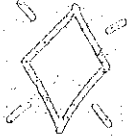
Educational Progress in the City of Brotherly Love

Philadelphia public schools have seen a radical transformation in the last five years. For the first time in modern history, educational achievement is on the rise in a meaningful way. Such progress is attributable to the introduction of new and varied providers of education, something few traditional education researchers and observers are able to fully acknowledge.

Philadelphia has historically been a city of momentous events and firsts. It was the birthplace of our country's independence and our Constitution, home to the first American capital, development ground for some of the first public schools in the country, and currently a leader in education reform. In 2001 Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love," lived up to its moniker. To hasten the process for Philadelphia's children to receive a quality education, the city allowed privately managed organizations to take charge of some of the district's worst performing public schools. And hoping to boost sagging test scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and to improve the management that left the system \$215 million in the red, the city allowed the state to take control of the school district. Although a variety of different reforms were instituted, the School Reform Commission's (SRC) district-wide embrace of competition, and introduction of Education Service Providers (ESPs) to take over the worst performing schools in the city was truly unparalleled.

THE BEGINNING OF REAL EDUCATION REFORM

After Governor Tom Ridge was elected in 1994, the state's support for Philadelphia got a much closer look. Ridge was the first governor in a long while not to owe his election to the teachers unions and traditional education system. The state was spending approximately \$650 million annually to support the Philadelphia public school system with no results, which was one policy he had promised to change. Despite record urban spending, less than half of Philadelphia students entering high school in 1989 graduated four years later; students in only 15 out of 171 elementary schools scored at or above average on nationally recognized standardized tests.



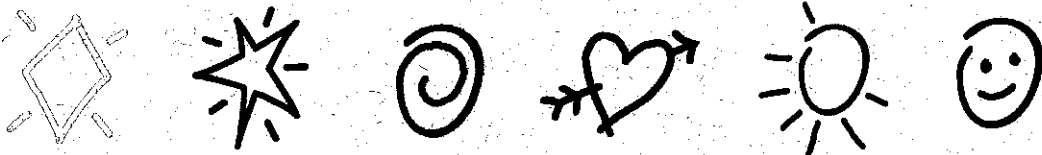
Edison's final report, issued in October 2001, recommended that the district's worst schools be turned over to private managers and that millions of dollars in non-professional school district contracts be outsourced to more efficient private companies. Philadelphia's horrible financial situation was only worsening, with the school district \$215 million in the red during 2001. Thus, the state moved in to take over and stabilize the floundering district. The city and the state worked out a compromise takeover agreement and established a five-person School Reform Commission (SRC), which would replace the city school board. Three members were appointed by the Governor, and two by the Mayor. The Philadelphia School Reform had one overriding principle — to reform the Philadelphia School District.

One of the commission's first efforts was exploring alternative forms of education management, along the lines recommended by Edison Schools. The School Reform Commission was vested with the authority to hire independent contractors to run the school system's headquarters as well as individual schools.

In the spring of 2002 the SRC members voted to implement what would become known as the diverse provider model, allowing multiple different entities to be in charge of certain city public schools. They would hire Edison to manage 20 of the district's worst performing schools, and another 25 were assigned between two other Education Service Provider (ESPs) and two local universities.

Local opposition, spearheaded by the local teacher union, vocally disapproved of an outside company running the district's central office, and prevented private managers from taking over that duty. However, after a series of proposals and reviews, the SRC decided to award control over 45 schools which were identified as "in need of extra help" to six outside education providers.

The School Reform Commission also hired former Chicago schools chancellor Paul Vallas to serve as the CEO of the district, a well-respected reformer with more business than education experience who had helped right many of the Windy City's wrongs earlier. In addition to the multiple provider program he would have to manage, he instituted a series of centralized reforms, including: smaller classes in early grades; a mandatory core curriculum in four major subjects, six weeks formative Benchmark tests assessing student mastery of the curriculum, related professional development for teachers, extended learning time for struggling students after school, on Saturdays, and in summer school, and review and support from central office intervention/assistance teams for low-performing



COMPETITION WORKS

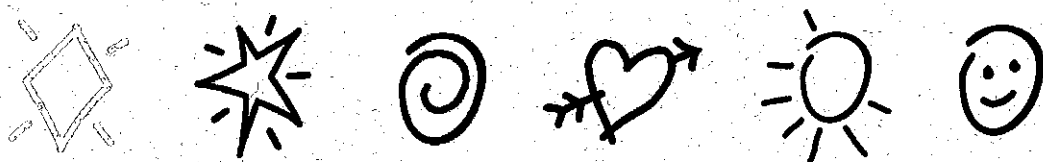
Looking back over the six year period between the time the state established the SRC and results of the most recent state test scores, a clear picture emerges that demonstrates the power of competitive and external partners to dramatically improve the overall education system.

In July 2006, the School District of Philadelphia released the results of the state's achievement test, which showed a record fourth consecutive year of growth in math and reading scores for all district students.

- Math scores rose 4.4 percentage points over the previous year, and since 2002 math scores are up 22.3 percentage points.
- Reading scores rose 2.5 percentage points over the last year, and 14.1 percentage points since 2002.
- At the same time as the percent of students scoring advanced or proficient boomed, the percentage scoring below basic has dramatically decreased. In math, the percentage of students scoring below basic dropped 3.9 percentage points (to 36.5 percent overall) when compared to last year, and has fallen a dramatic 22.7 percentage points since 2003.
- In reading, the decline is 3.4 percentage points (to 41.3 percent overall) from last year and 8.1 percentage points since 2003.

Because of the No Child Left Behind Act, larger numbers of students are being tested then ever before, so this impressive achievement occurred while the number of students being tested rose.

When looking at the scores of the six private managers, the results are equally if not more impressive, and a testament to the leadership of CEO Vallas. These outside providers, while initially responsible for some of the lowest performing schools in the district, have doubled, tripled, and in some instances quadrupled their proficiency percentages. In third-grade Math, a foundation level for mathematics learning, district-managed schools scored 53.8 percent (advanced or proficient) in 2005 and 60.7 percent in 2006, a gain of 6.9 percent. Over the same time-period, provider schools went from 35.6 percent (advanced or proficient) to 48 percent, a one-year improvement of 12.4 percent.



Philadelphia Charter School Group Follow-up to 4/10/08 Meeting

Background:

At the request of several key Philadelphia charter school leaders and stakeholders, The Center for Education Reform facilitated a meeting with at least 50 percent (approx 35) of the city's charter schools in early April 2008. Two of the nation's leading charter school advocates, James Merriman from the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence and Robert Cane from D.C.'s FOCUS (Friends of Choice in Urban Schools) joined CER in Philadelphia to share best practices in developing a citywide effort to advance charter schools.

Philadelphia's charter schools are currently operating within their own vacuums when faced with issues (emerging weekly) challenging their success. Sincere attempts are made by some of these individual schools to engage and activate their colleagues, but it is far too big for any one school to champion alone, especially when their time is spread so thin ensuring the best educational interests of their students. There is a critical need for a united voice representing the Philadelphia charter movement as a whole to coordinate and share information, messages, parents, best practices, services and philanthropy to sustain and grow the impact these schools are having on the City of Brotherly Love.

The Center for Education Reform has begun an ad-hoc effort to engage charter community (both leaders and key stakeholders) with regular meetings, list-serv, and other venues to constantly communicate with each other in advance of significant events or challenges to charter schools throughout the city. At the initial meeting, leaders discussed the need to organize around the 4/16 SRC meeting addressing the renewal of 16 charter schools. Less than one week later, CER's impact on the Philly charter movement is evident. *The Philadelphia Daily News* reported, "A larger than usual number of people – 19 – have signed up to speak about charter schools during the 1 p.m. meeting..."

Draft Goals of New Group

1. To raise public awareness of Philadelphia's charter school movement.
2. Increase communication between existing charter school community. Specifically in monitoring SRC and legislative actions, renewal advocacy, and in facilitating regular meetings with charter leaders.
 - a. Act as voice of movement in city hall.
 - b. Leverage/Broker the relationships individual charter leaders have with policymakers for the greater good of the movement.
3. Provide support to existing charters and individuals seeking to start charters.
4. Engage Philadelphia's philanthropic community in the charter school movement.

CER INTERNAL USE ONLY

Next Steps for CER

- Set-up List-serv (completed)
- Share draft plans with lead organizers
 - (In-progress, sent to D. Hardy and Janine Yass)
- Draft a budget for new group.
- Help to coordinate and set agenda for a future meeting among school leaders the week of April 28 at Preparatory Charter School (Pat Sack, Vice Principal)
- ~~CER to facilitate~~ follow-up meeting in Philadelphia within two days of the end of school year.
 - Establish board and present plan to group.
- CER to help facilitate and participate in an exclusive reception with donor prospects. (TBD)
- Through list-serv solicit achievement data about Philadelphia charter schools. (TBD)