

**THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY EDUCATION PLAN**

# **Excellent Schools for All Children**



PCAPS is a coalition of students, parents, teachers, school employees and citizens committed to strengthening Philadelphia's school system. In response to a massive privatization effort led by corporate interests seeking to implement failed education policies, PCAPS launched a grass-roots campaign to unite Philadelphians around a vision for successful public schools. At its heart, the conversation about the future of our schools is a discussion about fairness. We want all Philadelphia schools to be adequately funded and sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of their students. PCAPS has collected feedback from communities throughout the city and has authentically engaged the people directly affected by education reforms. The document below offers proven strategies from school districts around the country. Unlike the cookie-cutter corporate reform agenda we oppose, this plan offers solutions that are research-based and community-driven. PCAPS believes this is an opportunity for everyone with a stake in Philadelphia's public education system—students, parents, teachers, advocates, charter operators, elected officials, the SRC and others—to refocus on a single goal: improving every school. Members of the PCAPS coalition include: *Youth United for Change, Philadelphia Student Union, ACTION United, Philadelphia Federation Of Teachers, Philadelphia Home And School Council, UNITE HERE, SEIU 32BJ, Fight For Philly, Philadelphians Allied For a Responsible Economy, American Federation Of Teachers PA, Jobs With Justice, Teacher Action Group, Coalition Of Labor Union Women, Occupy Philadelphia Labor Work Group, Decarcerate PA, Association of Philadelphia School Librarians.*

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary | **3**

Introduction | **8**

Addressing the Fiscal “Crisis” of the BCG Plan | **11**

Why Implementation of the BCG Plan Would Have Devastating Consequences for Philadelphia | **16**

Creating an Alternative Vision for Philadelphia Schools | **23**

The Philadelphia Community Education Plan: Excellent Schools for All Children | **24**

Conclusion | **36**

Endnotes | **37**



# Executive Summary

When evaluating potential education reforms, the question we must ask is: Do they lead to better and more equitable educational opportunities, safer communities, less poverty and a stronger, healthier Philadelphia, or do they put our children, our families and our communities at greater risk? The plan created by the business management consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG), and introduced by the Philadelphia School Reform Commission (SRC), to “transform” the School District of Philadelphia unquestionably fails that test. While their goals may be admirable, and our school district undeniably needs significant reform, implementation of the BCG Plan would move our schools in precisely the wrong direction.

Claiming a \$1.1 billion budget deficit over the next five years, the BCG Plan calls for massive reductions in the funds available for the education of children and youth in traditional public schools, despite those schools already being severely under-resourced. It also seeks to implement a series of reforms that, based on extensive research and experience, will undoubtedly have a devastating impact on Philadelphia students, schools and communities. The BCG Plan includes the following proposed reforms:

- Closing between 40 and 64 traditional public schools;
- Substantially increasing the emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests;
- Dramatically expanding the number of charter schools;
- Outsourcing management of Philadelphia schools to outside organizations;
- Reducing the labor protections for teachers and school staff;
- Reducing costs by hiring teachers with less experience or without certification; and
- Having schools compete against each other like businesses, with the lowest performers being closed.

The central premise of the BCG Plan—that the school district suffers from a fiscal crisis that necessitates these radical structural changes—is deeply flawed. In fact, were it not for the deliberate underinvestment and disinvestment in Philadelphia schools by the state, and the misguided investment in an oversized and exceptionally costly charter school sector by the SRC, the district could easily be enjoying a multibillion-dollar surplus instead of a deficit. Indeed, the supposed fiscal “crisis” is largely a fallacy. The real crisis we face is one of misplaced priorities: Philadelphia’s traditional public schools are being unnecessarily starved of resources, and our children and youth are suffering the consequences. For example, as a result of the budget cuts within the last two years:

- The district’s teaching force has been reduced by nearly 1,500, dramatically increasing class sizes across the district;
- 86 percent of non-teaching assistant positions have been eliminated;
- There are 101 fewer school nurses;
- There are only 42 certified librarians for 249 schools;

- 1 out of every 4 schools does not have even a single full-time music teacher, and 1 out of 5 lacks a full-time music teacher;
- The number of counselors/student advisers/social service liaisons has been cut in half; and
- There have been significant reductions in support services for children with disabilities and English language learners, and numerous tutoring and sports programs have been eliminated.

Nevertheless, the BCG Plan’s projected budget deficit can be eliminated just as easily as it was created. The state, the city and the SRC have numerous options for ensuring Philadelphia schools have sufficient resources. Among the many possibilities presented are the following:

1. Restoring state funds that were cut by Gov. Tom Corbett.
2. Funding Philadelphia schools equitably, through use of the funding formula enacted in 2008.
3. Stopping the expansion of charter schools, and closing all charters that fail to both demonstrate superior performance in educating all students and provide an innovative educational model that is unavailable in district schools.
4. Reallocating funding from lower-priority projects, such as the governor’s expansion of the Pennsylvania prison system.

As for the BCG Plan itself, while there are some components that have merit, the key reforms it proposes are deeply flawed. The BCG Plan:

- **Relies on a series of failed and unproven strategies for improving education quality.** For example, while we don’t oppose high-quality charter schools coming into the community to meet a particular need, extensive research and our own experience in Philadelphia do not support the dramatic expansion of charter schools.
- **Ignores the root causes of low academic performance in the district, and contains virtually no meaningful strategies for improving teaching and learning.** The BCG Plan seems to assume that merely changing how the district is structured will itself improve the quality of education in Philadelphia schools. It won’t, and the BCG Plan cannot point to any credible research to suggest otherwise.
- **Will likely make schools less equitable and less safe, resulting in significant harm to students, especially low-income youth of color.** The likely consequences of the BCG Plan include larger class sizes, less-engaging curricula, lower-quality teaching, fewer student support services and extracurricular activities, and less assistance for high-need students. Not only will that reduce educational quality and equity throughout the district, it is also a recipe for creating schools that are less safe.
- **Promotes a low-cost, low-quality “McDonald’s Model” of education.** The BCG Plan is designed to create a system of schools that operates similar to McDonald’s, seeking out cheaper and less-experienced workers, offering the bare minimum in educational services, operating as if individual schools are franchises, and using a combination of rigorous competition, constant data-driven evaluation and punishment to drive performance.
- **Fails to recognize the importance of building strong schools in every neighborhood.** The BCG Plan’s approach to school closings is not supported by research and will be extremely harmful and destabilizing to Philadelphia communities. As such, there should be an *immediate moratorium on school closings, unless there is communitywide consensus that the school building is beyond repair and a full impact study is completed.*

The Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS) was created in response to this fundamentally misguided and reckless plan. We are a coalition of those Philadelphians with the most at stake in our school system, including parents, youth, teachers, school employees and other community members. While we recognize that the current system of education in Philadelphia is inadequate, we have no doubt that the BCG Plan would only make it substantially worse. More important, we believe we can do better than the options currently being considered. For Philadelphia's children and youth, we believe we must do better.

Thus, we have engaged in a major citywide research effort to collect input from thousands of other Philadelphians who would be dramatically affected by implementation of the BCG Plan yet were excluded from any meaningful role in its creation. While the scope of our research was limited by the speed with which the BCG Plan is being advanced, we were nevertheless able to gather extensive community input through the following:

- Developing and administering a survey to 1,594 parents, students and other community members;
- Hosting a conference in September with more than 300 participants;
- Conducting 26 listening sessions of approximately 750 youth from traditional public schools, charter schools and accelerated schools; and
- Hosting two town hall meetings, where we gathered input from approximately 250 community members.



Our research found that there was overwhelming opposition to the BCG Plan throughout Philadelphia. Indeed, according to our survey, *for every Philadelphian who supports the BCG Plan, there are nearly **seven** who oppose it.* Individual elements of the plan were even less popular. Additionally, there was widespread agreement that the BCG Plan would:

- Worsen the overall quality of education (by a ratio of 4-to-1);
- Lower the quality of teaching (5-to-1);
- Lead to inferior educational opportunities for students of color, students from low-income families, students with disabilities and English language learners (5-to-1); and
- Compromise student safety (4-to-1).

Our research also demonstrated that the best ideas for improving Philadelphia schools come from the students, parents, teachers, school employees and other community members who are in our schools nearly every day. When we asked hundreds of youth and adults what is included in a high-quality education, there was remarkable consistency. There was also nothing complicated or extravagant about what they mentioned; they simply want what is necessary to meet the educational and developmental needs of young people, and what schools all across the country (including some in Philadelphia) provide as the essential ingredients of effective education.

In our view, the needs of our children and youth must be at the absolute center of everything we do as a school system. Thus, we have used the input of city residents to create a **Philadelphia Student Bill of Rights**, which we believe should serve as the guiding set of principles for all district decision-making. Additionally, it should provide our schools and our city with a unifying vision of educational opportunity for our students, representing the commitment to each and every child that has been lacking for too long.

To implement the vision of the Philadelphia Student Bill of Rights, we have created **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan: Excellent Schools for All Children**, a 10-part strategy for creating the school system our city deserves. This plan represents the shared vision of our members, including tens of thousands of Philadelphians, along with the many other youth, parents, teachers, school employees and other community members who played a role in its creation. That community input has been combined with national scholarly research and our own collective experience with numerous schools that have succeeded, and with schools that have failed. Unlike the BCG Plan, our plan truly represents the will of the community, which is that a well-funded and well-run system of traditional public schools represents the best option for ensuring that *all* Philadelphia children and youth receive an excellent education.

The components of **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan** are:

1. **High-Quality Learning Conditions:** Ensure that every student has access to appropriate facilities and learning materials, and that every school is properly staffed.
2. **Comprehensive Student Supports:** Adopt a holistic approach to meeting student needs, and transform school buildings into community hubs.
3. **Enhanced Curriculum:** Ensure that every student has access to an academically rigorous curriculum that is enriched, well-rounded, engaging and culturally relevant.
4. **Improved Instruction:** Build collective instructional capacity in the district through enhanced professional development, equitable staffing, career advancement opportunities for teachers and internal leadership development.
5. **Performance Assessments:** Develop a comprehensive local assessment system that provides more meaningful information and supports improved teaching and learning.
6. **Authentic Accountability:** Create an accountability system that promotes school improvement through community involvement and comprehensive school-quality review.
7. **Support for Struggling Schools:** Develop the systemic infrastructure to provide assistance to schools in need of improvement.
8. **Truly Safe Schools:** Adopt a new understanding of school safety and discipline that focuses on improving school climate.
9. **Citywide Collaboration:** Convene multiple stakeholders to identify strategies for improving opportunities and outcomes for Philadelphia's children and youth.
10. **Democratic Representation:** Restore Philadelphia's local school board.

**The Philadelphia Community Education Plan** does require additional resources, but, as mentioned above, the problem is not the availability of resources—it's finding the political will to use them in the best interests of Philadelphia's children and youth.

Ultimately, Philadelphia faces a choice. That choice is whether we implement proven strategies that



can create a better future for our children, or go forward with the BCG Plan and suffer the consequences. We must choose whether to finally make some meaningful headway around issues of low graduation rates and lagging student achievement, or continue to cling to failed policies and pay the price in the form of failing schools, deteriorating communities and widespread economic hardship.

We, the parents, youth, teachers, school employees and other community members of the PCAPS coalition have made our choice, and we commit to building a brighter future for our city and our people. We ask only that our policymakers make the same commitment to us.

# Introduction

The families and communities of Philadelphia place an immense amount of trust in our schools. Parents trust our schools to keep their children safe. They trust our schools to provide their children with the education they need to grow up and lead a good life. Children and youth trust our schools to help them fulfill their potential and achieve their dreams. Many of Philadelphia's young people trust their schools to help them escape poverty. And we all trust our schools to help create the foundation for a healthy, safe and prosperous Philadelphia.

Those are the standards by which we judge major changes to our school system: Do they lead to better and more equitable educational opportunities, safer communities, less poverty and a stronger Philadelphia? Or do they put our children, our families and our communities at greater risk? Far too often, the education reforms made by the leaders of the School District of Philadelphia have violated the trust we have placed in them, because their actions were not made in the best interests of all students. Now we are presented with a radical plan to “transform” our school system that was created by the business management consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG), introduced by the Philadelphia School Reform Commission (SRC), and apparently heavily influenced by local corporate leaders and other wealthy, powerful interests.<sup>1</sup> While their goals may be admirable, and our school district undeniably needs significant reform, the changes proposed by the “BCG Plan”<sup>2</sup> would move our schools in precisely the wrong direction. In fact, the BCG Plan represents a severe threat to the well-being of Philadelphia's students, families and communities, and is by far the most significant breach yet of the trust we place in our school leaders.

The BCG Plan, if implemented, would have a devastating impact on Philadelphia students, schools and communities. Claiming a \$1.1 billion budget deficit over the next five years,<sup>3</sup> it calls for massive reductions in the funds available for the education of children and youth in traditional public schools, despite those schools already being severely under-resourced. It also seeks to implement a series of reforms that, based on extensive research and experience, will undoubtedly lead to lower-quality educational opportunities for students and will cause substantial harm to families throughout the city. The reforms proposed by the BCG Plan include the following:

- Closing between 40 and 64 traditional public schools;<sup>4</sup>
- Substantially increasing the emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests;<sup>5</sup>
- Dramatically expanding the number of charter schools;<sup>6</sup>
- Outsourcing management of Philadelphia schools to outside organizations;<sup>7</sup>
- Reducing the labor protections for teachers and school staff;<sup>8</sup>
- Reducing costs by hiring teachers with less experience or without certification;<sup>9</sup> and
- Having schools compete against each other like businesses, with the lowest performers being closed.<sup>10</sup>

The Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS) was created in response to this fundamentally misguided and reckless plan. We are a coalition of those Philadelphians with the most at stake in our school system, including parents, youth, teachers, school employees and other com-



munity members. We are united by our belief that a high-quality public education is the right of every child, and that our school system and elected officials should treat it as such. While we recognize that the current system of education in Philadelphia is inadequate, we have no doubt that the BCG Plan would only make it substantially worse. More important, we believe we can do better than the options currently being considered. For Philadelphia’s children and youth, we believe we must do better.

The BCG Plan proposes that we sink the Titanic with budget cuts while simultaneously rearranging the deck chairs with unproven structural reforms. In contrast, we understand that what Philadelphia really needs is to build a whole new ship that doesn’t leak. To guide that process, we have engaged in a major citywide research effort to collect input from thousands of Philadelphians who would be dramatically affected by implementation of the BCG Plan yet were excluded from any meaningful role in its creation. While the scope of our research was limited by the speed with which the BCG Plan is being advanced, we were nevertheless able to gather extensive community input through the following:

- Developing and administering a survey to 1,594 parents, students and other community members;<sup>11</sup>
- Hosting a conference in September with more than 300 participants;
- Conducting 26 listening sessions of approximately 750 youth from traditional public schools, charter schools and accelerated schools; and
- Hosting two town hall meetings, where we gathered input from approximately 250 community members.

That research has been combined with national scholarly research and our own collective experience with numerous schools that have succeeded—and with schools that have failed—to create a community-based plan for improving Philadelphia schools.



**The Philadelphia Community Education Plan: Excellent Schools for All Children**, which is presented below following an analysis of the BCG Plan, represents the perspective of our members, including tens of thousands of Philadelphians. It also reflects the input of the thousands of others who participated in the research process. Unlike the BCG Plan, our plan truly represents the will of the community, which is that a well-funded and well-run system of traditional public schools represents the best option for ensuring *all* Philadelphia children and youth receive an excellent education.

Our plan also represents the community’s rejection of BCG Plan “reforms” that: (a) lead to additional disinvestment in our children and youth; (b) undervalue and de-professionalize our teachers and other school employees; (c) fail to address the educational and developmental needs of students; (d) increase community poverty through additional employee layoffs and pay cuts; and (e) promote failed privatization policies that relegate far too many of our children to a future of unemployment, poverty and prison. Indeed, according to our survey, for every Philadelphian who supports the BCG Plan, there are nearly

seven who oppose it. This reflects broad recognition among Philadelphians that the BCG Plan does not serve their interests, and that we need to move in an entirely different direction.



We believe that the School District of Philadelphia can become the best urban school district in the country. We believe it can become a national model for providing excellent education to students from high-poverty communities. We believe we can create strong schools in every neighborhood—the schools every child deserves, every parent hopes for and every educator wants to work in. We can create schools that lift up entire communities and make Philadelphia the city we all want it to be. We believe this is all possible, but, to get there, we need real school reform that addresses the root causes of what ails our schools, not the budget cuts and failed, superficial reforms of the BCG Plan.

**The Philadelphia Community Education Plan** can point the way to a better future for Philadelphia, can renew the promise of our schools, and can begin to restore the trust that we all place in them.

# Addressing the Fiscal “Crisis” of the BCG Plan

As justification for the massive spending cuts and extreme policy changes in their plan, the SRC and BCG have consistently cited the fiscal “crisis” facing the district. While much has been said about the consequences of this so-called crisis, very little has been said about the causes of it. To understand those causes, it is important to recognize the following:

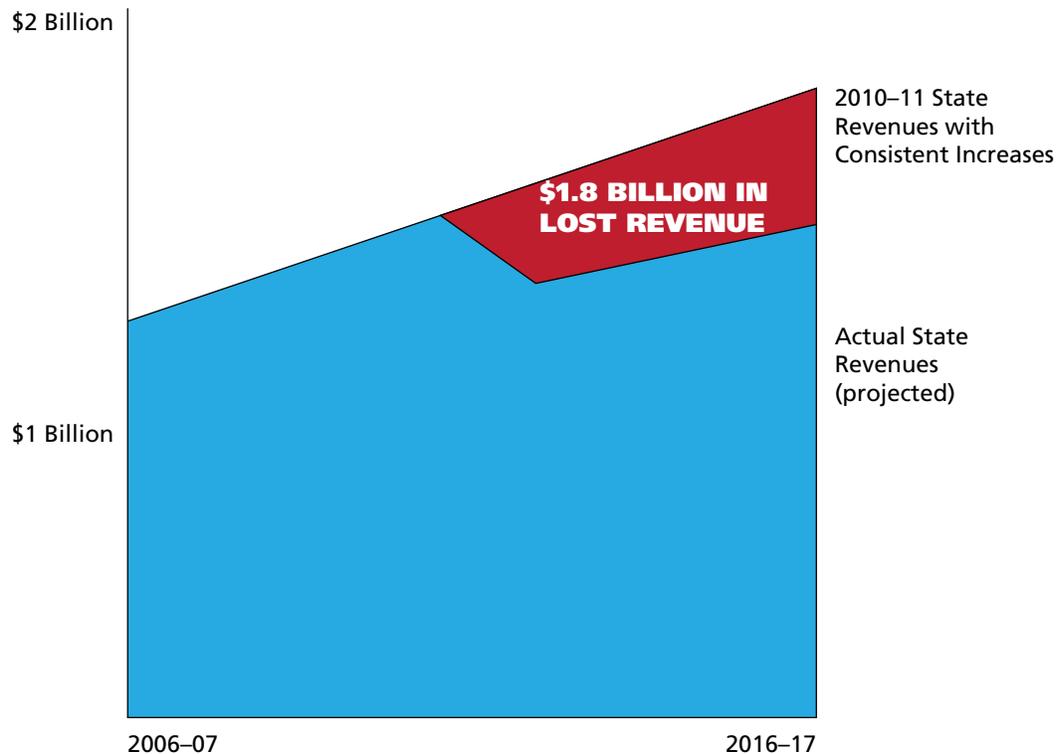
1. Since 2001, the School District of Philadelphia has been largely under state control. The SRC, which is the governing body of the district, has five members. The governor of Pennsylvania appoints three of them, and the mayor of Philadelphia appoints the other two.
2. Philadelphia schools have long been underfunded relative to surrounding districts. For example, in 2009-10, the average Philadelphia classroom received \$50,000 less in annual funding than its counterparts in nearby Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery counties.<sup>12</sup> This is despite serving far more students who have disabilities, are learning English or are living in poverty, which result in significant additional educational costs.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Pennsylvania has one of the least equitable school funding systems in the country.<sup>14</sup>
3. The SRC has consistently sought to expand the number of charter schools in Philadelphia in recent years, despite substantial additional cost to the district. In fact, according to BCG, each student who enrolls in a charter school (non-Renaissance) costs the district \$7,000 more than if the student were in a traditional public school.<sup>15</sup> Currently, that means it costs the district more than \$300 million more each year than it would if these students were educated in other settings.<sup>16</sup> The SRC’s expansion of charter schools has continued despite considerable research showing that these schools have not outperformed their traditional public school counterparts,<sup>17</sup> even while enjoying highly preferential conditions.<sup>18</sup>
4. In 2011, Gov. Tom Corbett reversed substantial progress made by former Gov. Ed Rendell in funding education more equitably by including massive cuts to education in his budget.<sup>19</sup> While the broader economic recession had decreased state revenues, thus requiring some hard choices, the governor’s cuts particularly affected Philadelphia schools, with the district receiving more than \$200 million less than it had the previous year.<sup>20</sup>
5. In response, the district has made more than \$300 million in budget cuts over the last two years, which included, among other things: eliminating thousands of staff positions; cutting sports, music and art programs; eliminating tutoring programs; and eliminating support services for children with disabilities and English language learners.<sup>21</sup>
6. In April 2012, the SRC hired BCG, which relied upon the governor’s reduced 2011-12 education budgetary amount as the baseline to project the five-year budget deficit of \$1.1 billion. That projected deficit was the primary justification for the BCG Plan.
7. Despite the supposed fiscal crisis, the BCG Plan includes even more expansion of charter schools, until they would account for 40 percent of Philadelphia public school enrollment in 2016-17.<sup>22</sup> BCG projects that this will cost the district an additional \$516 million over the next five years.<sup>23</sup>
8. The BCG Plan includes massive additional spending cuts—at least \$278 million per year—for Philadelphia’s traditional public schools between now and 2017.<sup>24</sup>

9. State revenues have actually increased in recent years, resulting in more funds being available than there were even before the governor's cuts to education and before the economic recession began.<sup>25</sup> However, rather than reinvesting in Philadelphia schools, Gov. Corbett has budgeted \$685 million to build three new prisons, and expand nine others, in the state.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, in 2011 he increased the Department of Corrections budget by 11 percent, or \$186 million.<sup>27</sup>
10. BCG has been paid at least \$4.4 million in consulting fees since April.<sup>28</sup>

The implications of these various actions are best understood by adding up the numbers. For example, because the BCG Plan assumed that state funding would not return to pre-2011-12 levels, even with the state's fiscal position improving, the harmful effects of the governor's budget cuts for Philadelphia weren't limited to just one year. Under the BCG approach, that reduced funding amount becomes the norm, and Philadelphia schools must then learn to continue operating with substantially less assistance from the state. Thus, because the BCG Plan projects ahead five years, that one-time reduction ultimately has at least a six-year impact.

To put the cumulative effect of these crushing cuts into perspective, if state funding for Philadelphia had instead merely followed the 20-year trend, the district would stand to receive more than \$1.8 billion more between 2011 and 2017 than what was projected by the BCG Plan (plus what it actually received in 2011).<sup>29</sup> In other words, if not for the state's unnecessary disinvestment in Philadelphia schools, the district would be enjoying a budget surplus rather than a deficit.

**School District of Philadelphia**  
Lost Revenue from Governor Corbett's Disinvestment and BCG Projections



Additionally, if the state's school funding system were not so inequitable, and Philadelphia schools were funded at the same level as nearby Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery county schools, Philadelphia would receive nearly \$2.3 billion in additional funding over the next five years.<sup>30</sup> Note that this would still not produce a truly equitable system, given that all of these districts receive substan-

tially less than the most well-funded schools in the state and that Philadelphia’s concentration of high-need students merits additional resources.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, even a slightly less inequitable system would provide twice as much revenue as what the BCG Plan claims is lacking.

Moreover, the SRC’s emphasis on expanding charter schools in recent years, and its failure to manage that policy shift in a fiscally responsible way, have been severely costly. Even if we assume that a limited investment in innovative charter schools was worthwhile despite the substantial additional costs, it will still cost the district more than \$1.4 billion more during the next five years than it would have if those remaining students were not in charter schools.<sup>32</sup>

On top of that is the additional \$516 million it will cost to implement the SRC’s call for additional expansion of charter schools over the next five years. Thus, the fiscal effects of the SRC’s expansion of charter schools are, by themselves, far greater than the projected deficit.



<b>Underinvestment, Disinvestment &amp; Misinvestment</b>			
BCG Projected Budget Deficit vs. Potential Additional Revenue and Cost Savings for Philadelphia Schools			
BCG Projected Budget Deficit: 2012-2017	\$1.1 Billion	Additional SDP Revenue if Funded at Same Level as Montgomery/Bucks/Delaware County Schools: 2012-2017	\$2.3 Billion
		Additional SDP Revenue if State Investment Had Followed Trend of Previous Years: 2011-2017	\$1.8 Billion
		Additional Cost to SDP Because of Oversized Charter School Sector: 2012-2017	\$1.4 Billion
		Additional Cost to SDP of Continued Expansion of Charter Schools: 2012-2017	\$516 Million
<b>Potential Additional Revenue and Cost Savings for Philadelphia Schools</b>			<b>\$6.0 Billion</b>

The cumulative effects of this pattern of underinvestment, disinvestment and misinvestment by the state and the SRC are astounding (see box). Indeed, the district could easily be enjoying a multibillion-dollar surplus, rather than facing the effects of this projected fiscal crisis. Yet what becomes apparent in examining this sequence of events is that this supposed crisis is not about money; it’s about ideology. The governor has made a determination that the children and youth of Philadelphia are unworthy of appropriate investment. Moreover, the actions of the governor, the SRC (which, again, is

## Community Voices

“There is no question my son will go to college, but I am very concerned that the depletion of resources in our public schools is making the path more and more challenging. My son’s school does not have a library or a computer room. We share a school nurse with three other schools, so she comes to our school only one day a week.”

—Dawn Hawkins, Parent of 7th-Grader

controlled by the governor and the mayor), and BCG appear intended to starve Philadelphia’s traditional public schools of funds and instead spend them on charter schools, thereby shifting billions of public dollars into the hands of nonpublic entities.

As a result, the already under-resourced Philadelphia schools have been severely depleted, resulting in deplorable learning conditions for our students. For example, as a result of the budget cuts within the last two years (see box):

- The district’s teaching force has been reduced by nearly 1,500, dramatically increasing class sizes across the district;<sup>33</sup>
- 86 percent of non-teaching assistant positions have been eliminated;
- There are 101 fewer school nurses;
- There are only 43 certified librarians for 249 schools;<sup>34</sup>
- 1 out of every 4 schools does not have even a single full-time music teacher, and 1 out of 5 lacks a full-time music teacher;<sup>35</sup> and
- The number of counselors/student advisers/social service liaisons has been cut in half.

### School District of Philadelphia Staff Reductions in Last Two Years

Source: The School District of Philadelphia,  
FY 2012-13 Consolidated Budget & Office of Human Resources Information Management

	2010-11 Full-Time Employees	2012-13 Full-Time Employees (Requested)	Reduction	% Reduction
Teachers—Regular Ed	8,946	7,764	1,182	13%
Teachers—Special Ed	1,864	1,624	240	13%
Teachers—Early Childhood	338	274	64	19%
Supportive Service Assistants	1,474	1,067	407	28%
Non-Teaching Assistants	148	20	128	86%
Counselors/Student Advisers/ Social Services Liaisons	746	377	369	49%
Nurses	328	227	101	31%

It cannot be overstated how harmful these dynamics have been for students all across the district, and yet the BCG Plan calls for even more budget cuts. Youth, parents, teachers, school employees and other community members are legitimately outraged because this crisis could have been—and could still be—avoided. They are outraged because the SRC/BCG fiscal “crisis” is actually a crisis of choice. The real crisis we face is one of misplaced priorities. Other young people from around the state have been prioritized over Philadelphia children and youth. Expanding charter schools and increasing the privatization of public goods have been prioritized over ensuring that Philadelphia students in traditional public schools receive a high-quality education. Projects such as building more prisons have been prioritized over our children.

The BCG Plan’s approach is to claim poverty and hope that nobody notices all the big-ticket items being purchased. For example, if the SRC were truly concerned about the supposed crisis, the fiscally

responsible approach would be to simply forego the expansion of charter schools and close low-performing charter schools that are substantially more costly to operate and have not demonstrated they are worthy of the additional investment. Instead, the focus of the BCG Plan is on closing traditional public schools, laying off and cutting the salaries of teachers and school employees, and eliminating other services for students.<sup>36</sup>

In short, the claim that we suffer from a fiscal crisis is largely a fallacy. The projected budget deficit can be eliminated just as easily as it was created. There are a number of options for both closing the deficit and creating a surplus that is more than sufficient to finance the sound investments described below in The Philadelphia Community Education Plan, including:

1. Restoring state funds that were cut by Gov. Corbett.
2. Funding Philadelphia schools equitably, through use of the funding formula enacted in 2008.<sup>37</sup>
3. Stopping the expansion of charter schools, and closing all charters that fail to both demonstrate superior performance in educating all students and provide an innovative educational model that is unavailable in district schools.<sup>38</sup>
4. Reallocating funding from lower-priority projects, such as the expansion of the Pennsylvania prison system.

There are also many other potential revenue sources for our schools (see box). Indeed, the state, city and SRC have numerous options for remedying the mistakes of the past, and for creating a better fiscal future for the district. All they have to do is choose.

## Other Options for Funding Philadelphia Schools

### Close the Tax Loopholes that Enrich Corporations

Pennsylvania will spend \$2.4 billion next year on business tax breaks, a figure that has tripled in the last 10 years. Because of the so-called Delaware loophole, 70 percent of corporations that do business in Pennsylvania pay no corporate income taxes at all, costing the state an estimated \$500 million a year. Halting the phasing out of the capital stock and franchise tax could bring in an estimated \$275 million a year.

### Renegotiate Bad Deals with Wall Street Banks

Interest-rate swap deals with banks have cost the city and school district an estimated \$331 million, while leading to profits for Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo and other large banks. The city and school district could potentially lose more than \$240 million in additional net interest payments from still-active swaps between the city agencies and the same financial institutions if interest rates continue to remain low.

### Collect More Property Taxes

Philadelphia has the most tax-exempt land (by value) of any major city in the United States. One significant cause is the policy providing all new construction in the city with a 10-year tax abatement. Adjusting that policy could generate more than \$100 million annually for the city.

### Contributions from Large Nonprofit Organizations

Like many cities, Philadelphia had, when Ed Rendell was mayor, a robust program of voluntary contributions by nonprofit organizations that are exempt from paying property taxes, but that is no longer the case. Reinvigorating this program could provide tens of millions of dollars to the city annually.

### Fair Tax on Natural Gas Production

The impact fee on natural gas producers is the lowest in the nation. A tax modeled on neighboring West Virginia could double the current \$205 million in revenue.

Sources: Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center; Plan Philly, "Fiscal Reform in Philadelphia Faces a Taxing Problem," at <http://planphilly.com/fiscal-reform-philadelphia-faces-taxing-problem-2>; Committee of Seventy, "How Philly Works: An Answer to Increased City Revenue," at [www.seventy.org/OurViews\\_How\\_Philly\\_Works\\_An\\_Answer\\_to\\_City\\_Revenue.aspx](http://www.seventy.org/OurViews_How_Philly_Works_An_Answer_to_City_Revenue.aspx).

# Why Implementation of the BCG Plan Would Have Devastating Consequences for Philadelphia

In spite of the BCG Plan's massive proposed cuts to educational services, it claims that its policy changes would still result in dramatically improved school performance. In fact, the plan sets out some extremely lofty goals, such as increasing the number of students who are proficient in reading by more than 60 percent, increasing the graduation rate by more than 30 percent, and increasing the college attendance rate by 38 percent, all within two years.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, these goals are quite absurd, both because no large school system has ever come close to achieving them, and because there is no hope that the policy proposals in the BCG Plan could make Philadelphia the first of its kind.

To be fair, there are a number of recommendations in the BCG Plan that do have merit and may be worth considering further. Among them are:

- Developing a more robust framework for evaluating charter schools;<sup>40</sup>
- Exploring collaborative arrangements among schools;<sup>41</sup>
- Using student surveys, student portfolios, and principal and peer observations in the teacher evaluation system;<sup>42</sup>
- Increasing investment in the human resources and information technology departments;<sup>43</sup> and
- Implementing positive school disciplinary alternatives.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the BCG approach has many serious flaws that would lead to significant and irreparable harm to Philadelphia students, schools and communities if it were implemented. In fact, rather than promoting school improvement, the BCG Plan stands as an obstacle to authentic school reform.

## **The BCG Plan relies on a series of failed and unproven strategies for improving education quality.**

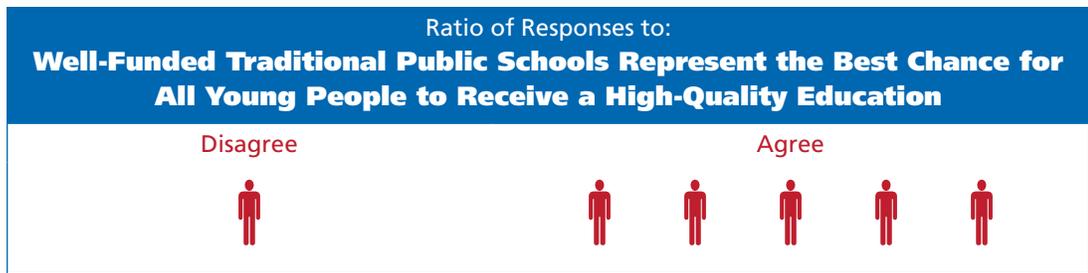
At the core of the BCG Plan are a number of policy reforms that have become increasingly common throughout the country, particularly in large cities. However, these strategies have either: (a) not yet been proven to be successful and thus worthy of adoption in Philadelphia;<sup>45</sup> or (b) failed to produce the intended results.

For example, as mentioned above, there is a considerable body of research demonstrating that charter schools are no more effective, on average, than traditional public schools.<sup>46</sup> This is not to suggest that our coalition is anti-charter schools. We aren't. We recognize that there are some outstanding charter schools in Philadelphia, just as there are many excellent traditional public schools. However, we also recognize that there are just as many, if not more, subpar charter schools (just as there are clearly many traditional public schools that are underperforming). While we do not oppose high-quality charter schools coming into the community to meet a particular need, we strongly reject the notion that dramatically expanding the number of charter schools, and turning traditional public schools into charter schools, will meet the needs of our communities in the long term.

We also strongly oppose the continued use of charter schools by policymakers to destabilize traditional public schools, perhaps our most important community assets. While there is much we can

learn from the successful practices of some charter schools, too often those successes are misused to justify increased privatization of the public school system. This is especially troublesome when there isn't a level playing field between charters and traditional public schools. In Philadelphia, many charters receive substantial additional resources and other advantages that traditional public schools don't receive.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the use of apples-to-oranges comparisons to pit charters and traditional public schools against each other is both disingenuous and destructive.

In short, the BCG Plan's proposed expansion of the charter school sector lacks any legitimate justification, especially when considering the added costs it would entail and the fact that Philadelphia already has the highest percentage of students in charter schools of any large school system.<sup>48</sup> This was affirmed by survey respondents, who agreed by a ratio of nearly 5-to-1 that traditional public schools represent the best option for ensuring a high-quality system of education for all students.



Similarly, the BCG Plan calls for even more emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing, such as to make decisions about closing schools and whether to fire teachers and principals. Again, there is an extensive research base demonstrating that existing tests are invalid for these purposes.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, we strongly reject the over-reliance on this “test-and-punish” approach, which has already caused serious harm to the educational experiences of students throughout Philadelphia. The members of our coalition already live with the effects of test-driven reforms on a daily basis. We have already observed the curriculum become weaker and more narrow; we have already been subjected to hours upon hours of mindless test preparation; and we have already witnessed countless students who have been turned off to learning—and teachers who have been turned off to teaching—because of it. We have also already been forced to tolerate having important decisions made about our schools and our futures on the basis of simplistic bubble tests that are incapable of truly measuring the knowledge and abilities of students or educators.

In our experience, high-stakes standardized testing has harmed Philadelphia's students far more than it has helped them (see box). While the primary purpose of any assessment system should be to improve teaching and learning, our current system has done too little of either. Instead, it has largely reinforced what

### National Resolution on High-Stakes Testing

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association has—along with more than 460 other education, faith, civil rights, child advocacy and community organizations—signed onto the “National Resolution on High-Stakes Testing,” which includes the following declarations:

- “[T]he over-reliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by hampering educators’ efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy.”
- “[I]t is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness.”
- “[T]he over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate.”
- “[H]igh-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities.”

Source: <http://timeoutfromtesting.org/nationalresolution/>.

we already know while being used to punish, rather than support, schools that are struggling or that serve high-need populations. There is simply no connection between extensive use of high-stakes standardized tests and high-quality education, and our education system should not be degraded and deteriorated any further by making it even more test-centric.

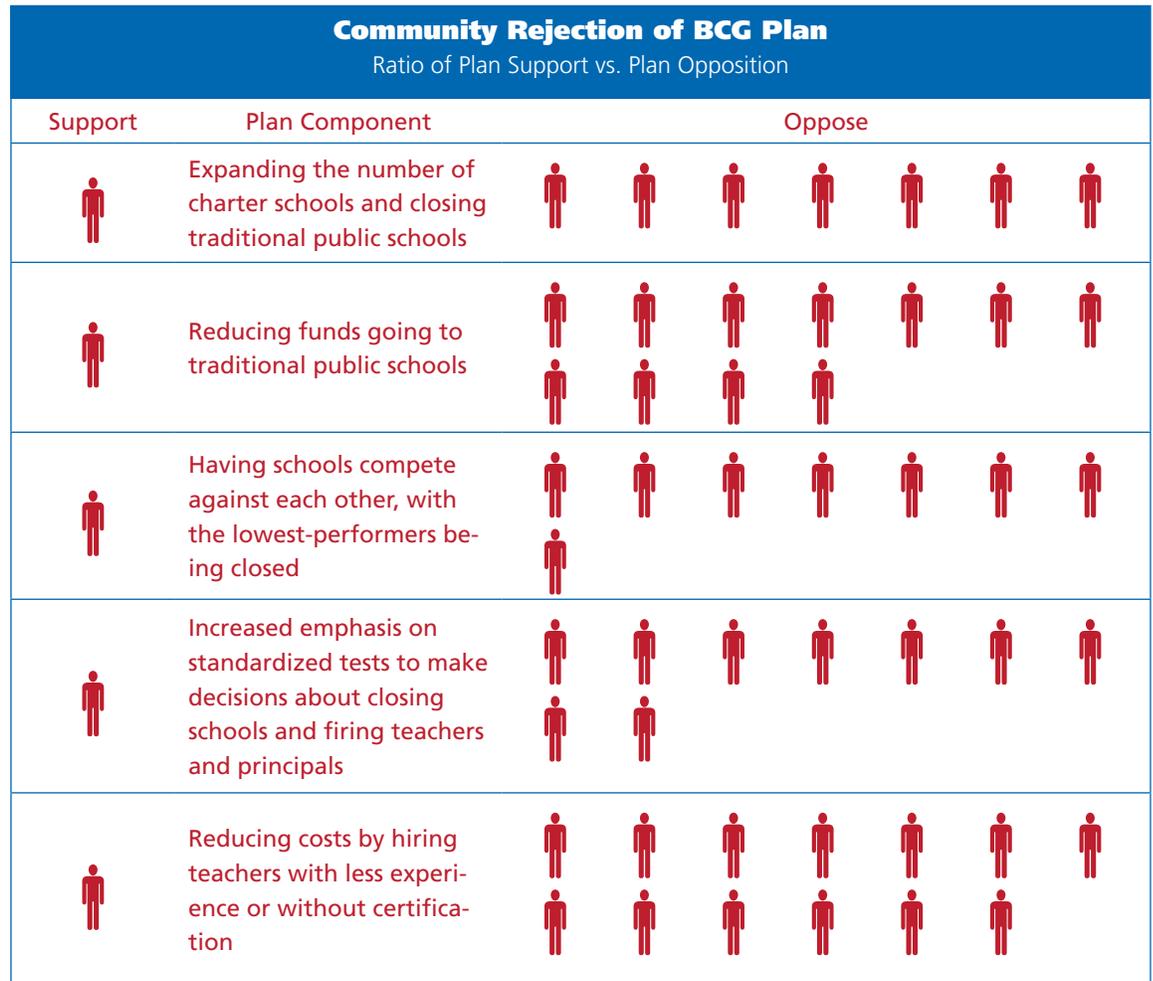
## Community Voices

“Education is NOT a business, it is an obligation of our society to develop our next generation into informed and contributing members of our community and the world. The ‘profit’ is a populace who will be able to move us into the future.”

—Leon, 65-year-old community member

The BCG Plan also relies heavily on a model of school reform in which schools compete against each other and the lowest performers are closed. It is not surprising that BCG relies on such an approach because it is a business consulting firm, and thus it treated the School District of Philadelphia like it would any of its business clients. However, creating a system of schools in which every child can receive a high-quality education is fundamentally different than running a corporation that makes widgets. Educating effectively requires collaboration, not competition. We cannot afford to pit schools against each other, especially when we know from research and experience that the competitive approach inevitably leads to large numbers of students being left behind and even pushed out of school.<sup>50</sup>

Our research demonstrates that Philadelphians overwhelmingly oppose all of these reforms, along with others included in the BCG Plan. For example, in our survey, we asked whether they supported or opposed five key elements of the plan, and the most “popular” element of the plan was rejected 7-to-1 (see box). The least popular of the five proposals—hiring teachers with less experience or without certification—was rejected 13-to-1. The ratio of strong opposition to strong support was even more striking, ranging from 13-to-1 to 30-to-1. The people of Philadelphia have evidently seen through the grandiose claims and recognized just how wrongheaded the BCG Plan is.



**The BCG Plan ignores the root causes of low academic performance in the district, and contains virtually no meaningful strategies for improving teaching and learning.**

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the BCG Plan is that there is no analysis of what is preventing better student outcomes, and almost nothing directed at improving teaching and learning. The BCG Plan seems to assume that merely changing how the district is structured will itself improve the quality of education in Philadelphia schools. It won't, and the BCG Plan cannot point to any credible research to suggest otherwise.<sup>51</sup>

If the BCG Plan were serious about improving Philadelphia schools, it would focus on what's happening in the classroom, not on how the district is structured. It would address strategies for improving instructional content, instructional quality, school resources, programs directed at other academic and developmental needs of students, and collaboration with teachers and parents.<sup>52</sup> Instead, it devotes virtually no attention to these critical factors. In fact, rather than promoting improved instruction, the BCG Plan would instead stifle high-quality teaching and learning.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, the BCG Plan hinges largely on the district having greater freedom to fire teachers and principals and hire less expensive and less qualified replacements. Their approach is based on the assumption that there are legions of superior educators waiting in the wings, eager to join a district in which (a) teachers already receive at least 13 percent less in pay and teach 17 percent more students in their classrooms than in surrounding districts;<sup>54</sup> (b) there is already extremely high teacher turnover;<sup>55</sup> and (c) the district is now proposing to cut services, limit their job protection and cut their pay even further.<sup>56</sup> Again, they cannot produce any evidence to support this assertion.

While there is no question that many of our schools need more high-quality teachers, the BCG Plan would serve only to de-professionalize teachers and make it more difficult to attract and retain excellent teachers. We know that the creation of more successful schools will only be achieved through building strong, positive relationships between educators and the communities they serve.<sup>57</sup> Thus, it is both irresponsible and detrimental to the long-term success of our schools when initiatives such as the BCG Plan actively frustrate that objective by demonizing the individuals who have made the greatest commitment of time and energy to meeting the needs of all Philadelphia's children.

**The BCG Plan will likely make schools less equitable and less safe, resulting in significant harm to students, and especially low-income youth of color.**

Based on what we know about the BCG Plan, along with research and experiences from other cities where such reforms have been implemented, its likely consequences include larger class sizes (and less adult supervision), less engaging curricula, lower-quality teaching, fewer student support services and extracurricular activities, and less assistance for high-need students.<sup>58</sup> Not only would that reduce educational quality and equity throughout the district,<sup>59</sup> it is also a recipe for creating schools that are less safe (especially when considering the effects of school closures and greater student mobility).<sup>60</sup>

These dynamics were evident to community members who, when asked in the survey what effects the BCG Plan would have, responded overwhelmingly that it would do the following (see box):

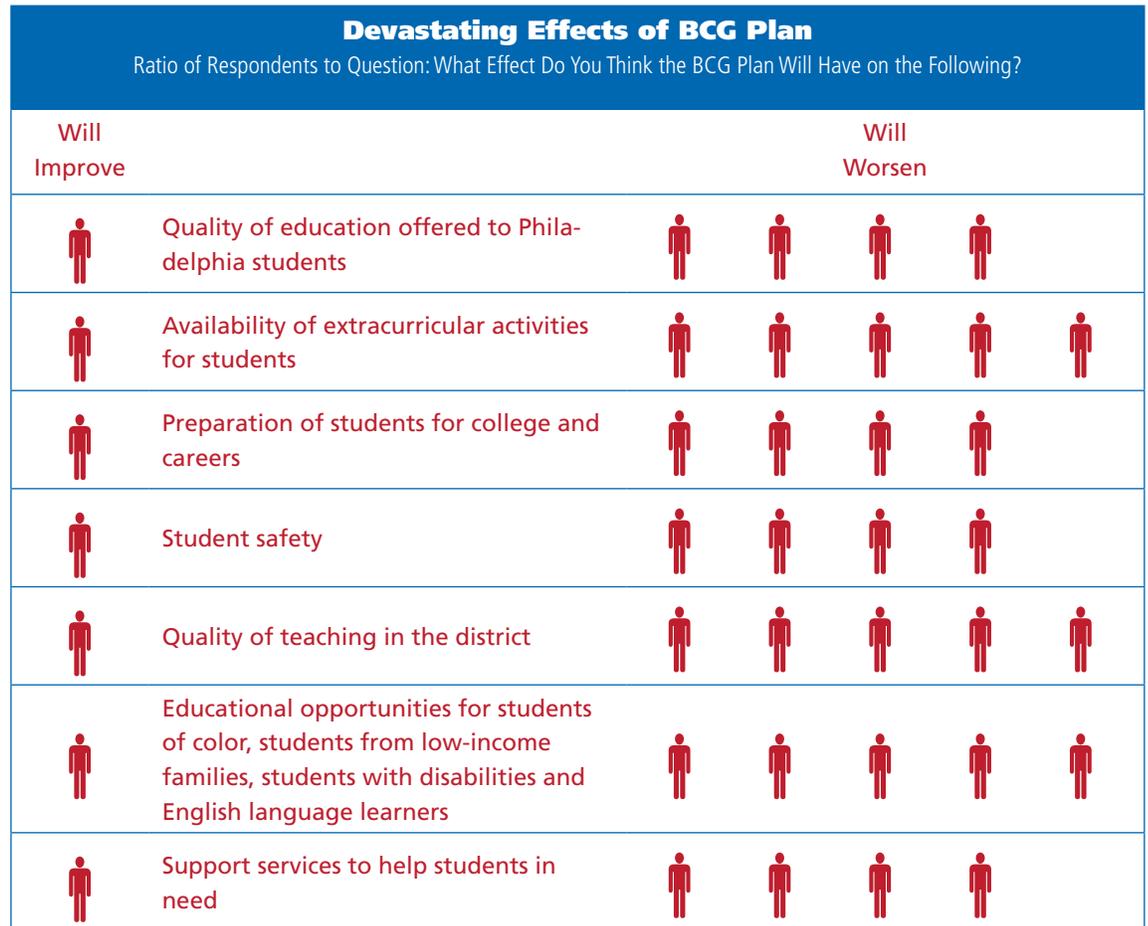
- Worsen the overall quality of education (by a ratio of 4-to-1);
- Lower the quality of teaching (5-to-1);

## Community Voices

“The mentality that education ‘reform’ is centered around siphoning resources away from traditional neighborhood schools and into alternative types of schools is not only seriously flawed, but it is detrimental to our students. As a teacher in a traditional neighborhood school in a highly impoverished neighborhood, I can tell you what my students need: They need quality teachers, and they need resources. They do not need money and time spent on ‘transforming’ our school. They need ground up, meaningful support. ... We will continue to provide our children with a quality education every day. That would certainly be an easier task with equitable funding and a level playing field.”

—Hillary, teacher

- Lead to inferior educational opportunities for students of color, students from low-income families, students with disabilities and English language learners (5-to-1);
- Compromise student safety (4-to-1); and
- Worsen preparation of students for college and careers (4-to-1).



Philadelphia residents recognize that the BCG Plan would lead to an increasingly impoverished school system that would be even less equipped to serve Philadelphia’s children and youth. They also recognize that the students most likely to suffer are those who are most vulnerable—especially low-income youth of color.<sup>61</sup> Tragically, by compromising their educational opportunities so significantly, the likely effect of the BCG Plan is that more of these young people will be pushed out of school and toward a future of poverty and even incarceration.<sup>62</sup>

### **The BCG Plan and Community Poverty**

Not only can we expect the BCG Plan to produce significant economic hardship throughout the city in the long term, it will also do so in the short term. The plan calls for additional layoffs and pay cuts for teachers and school employees, and relies heavily on strategies that will make it easier to fire teachers, administrators and other school employees in the future. As a result, the BCG Plan will likely force even more Philadelphians—many of whom have children of their own in the school system—into poverty.

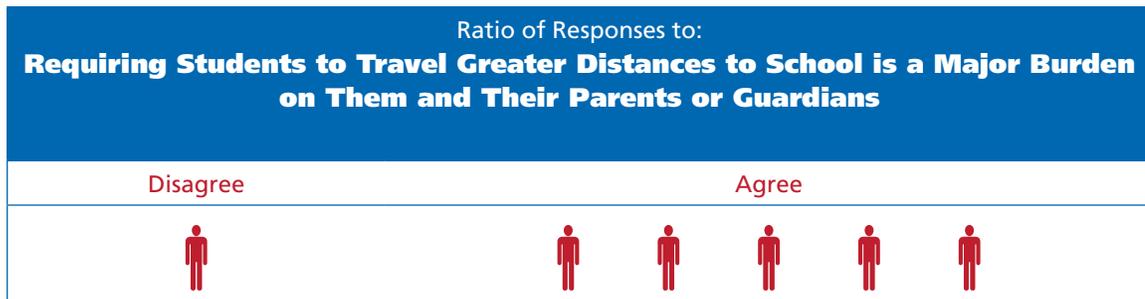
**The BCG Plan promotes a low-cost, low-quality “McDonald’s Model” of education.**

While the rhetoric of the BCG Plan may be ambitious, the reality of BCG’s proposal is that it attempts to implement a “McDonald’s Model” of education. By that we mean a system of schools that seeks out cheaper and less experienced workers, offers the bare minimum in educational services, operates as if individual schools are franchises, and uses a combination of rigorous competition, constant data-driven evaluation and punishment to drive performance. Of course, most people would prefer not to eat at McDonald’s very often, or work there very long, at least if they have other options. And the same is true of the system of schools proposed in the BCG Plan.

**The BCG Plan fails to recognize the importance of building strong schools in every neighborhood.**

The element of the BCG Plan that has received the most attention is the proposal to close between 40 and 64 schools. While most of the closings would be within the next year, the plan also calls for the ongoing closing of struggling schools that fail to show “immediate improvement.”<sup>63</sup> In our view, that is like using a sledgehammer to kill a fly, and it became abundantly clear during our research that Philadelphia residents are vehemently opposed to this proposal. In fact, if there was one message that came through the loudest during our research, it was that Philadelphians put great importance on building strong neighborhood schools in every community across the city, and on turning around struggling schools from within.

Among other concerns, BCG’s proposal would force many students to travel across the city to attend school. Along with being a significant safety risk for many young people, survey respondents also reported by a 5-1 margin that it would impose a major burden on students and their parents or guardians.



Additionally, the BCG Plan’s reckless approach to school improvement could be extremely harmful and destabilizing to local communities. As one parent said at a town hall meeting: “It does take a village to raise a child, and we need to stop taking the kids out of their village.” What these youth, parents and community members recognize, and the BCG Plan failed to grasp, is that schools are the backbones of communities, and the creation of high-quality schools is fundamentally about building high-quality relationships—relationships between teachers and students, between teachers and parents, and between schools and communities. Those types of relationships are impossible to achieve when the closing of schools is an essential element of your educational philosophy.

Moreover, BCG’s reliance on these heavy-handed strategies is not supported by research. Extensive studies have found similar reforms to deliver few, if any, benefits, while producing significant harm to students, communities and the school system overall.<sup>64</sup> In fact, we already have experience in Philadelphia with similar efforts to close down our schools and indiscriminately fire our teachers and

**Community Voices**

“If my school closed down, there would be a lot of dropouts. It would give a lot of students an excuse to drop out.”

—Marquan, 10th-Grader

“By closing down schools, they’re tearing apart relationships. A lot of these young people don’t have role models at home, but they have strong relationships with teachers or principals in their schools. Ending those relationships can shatter those children.”

—Carmen Wallace, Parent of 7th-Grader

administrators. These efforts have usually amounted to little more than an educational “shell game.”<sup>65</sup> Moreover, relative to some of the BCG Plan’s other strategies, closing these schools doesn’t even provide much of a fiscal benefit.<sup>66</sup>

In short, closing schools on this scale is simply not a winning strategy. Thus, we demand an immediate moratorium on school closings, unless there is communitywide consensus that the school building is beyond repair and a full impact study has been completed.

\* \* \*

The people who spend the most time in schools and have the most invested in their success—youth, parents, educators and other school employees—have seen through the BCG Plan’s sales pitch. We have already seen the devastating effects of the BCG Plan’s proposed reforms in places like Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Washington, D.C., and even here locally. We know where this leads. So to those who continue to promote this agenda in Philadelphia, we have one simple message: No more. Not here. Not again.



# Creating an Alternative Vision for Philadelphia Schools

Where many education reform plans go awry is in their pursuit of the newest fads. Over and over, students, parents and educators are subjected to the latest magic elixir with promises that it will solve all their schools' problems. These elixirs almost always come from elected officials or the business community, and usually result in a lower-quality, less equitable system of schools.

When it comes to building great schools, there are no magic elixirs or shortcuts. But that doesn't mean we don't know how to do it. In fact, we do know how to improve schools and achieve educational excellence. We know that real school improvements require sound strategies, targeted investments, and diligent and sustained efforts over time. They involve creating schools where young people feel safe, valued and cared for; where teachers are well-trained and well-supported; where students are engaged and have their developmental needs met. This may not be as popular as the latest education reform trend, but it's what works. And it can be done. Unfortunately, for many children, we simply choose not to do it. Instead, we continue to waste time and resources—human and monetary—on misguided strategies that we know will put the educational opportunities of our children at risk. We continue to drink the elixir and wonder why nothing gets better.

We believe that Philadelphians deserve better. We also believe there is simply too much at stake here not to apply the best research and knowledge we have available, including the invaluable input we have gathered from residents all across the city. Thus, we have produced **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan: Excellent Schools for All Children**, a blueprint for moving us forward as a school system and as a city. **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan** does require additional resources, but as we demonstrated above, the problem isn't the availability of resources—it's finding the political will to use them in the best interests of Philadelphia's children and youth.



# The Philadelphia Community Education Plan: Excellent Schools for All Children

Nationally, we routinely vilify public schools for their academic performance, yet in many cases, that criticism is much like blaming one's retirement account for not having enough money in it. In education, as in personal finance, you only get results on the back end when you invest on the front end. And the long-standing underinvestment in Philadelphia students and schools has been nothing short of unconscionable.

Our children and youth routinely face appalling conditions in their schools: overcrowded classrooms and schools; buildings in severe disrepair, with leaky roofs, poor lighting, broken heating and cooling systems, no drinkable water, no playground facilities, and mice and insect infestations; the lack of even the most basic learning materials; narrow, outdated curricula that fail to challenge students, speak to their lives or engage them; overburdened, undersupported teachers; lack of resources to support students with special needs and English language learners; excessively harsh school discipline, and perhaps the largest school police and security presence in the country;<sup>67</sup> lack of access to the arts, physical education, recess and school libraries; and no support to address the many challenges and struggles students experience outside of school.

These widespread systemic failings are at the very core of student alienation across the city. Indeed, the failure to provide equitable learning opportunities has left deep wounds in young people, parents and educators throughout Philadelphia. It's time that we heal together, by leveling the playing field and paying off the educational debt we owe to our children and youth.

The people of Philadelphia want the same thing as everyone else: for every child to receive a full and equal opportunity to get a high-quality education. When we asked hundreds of students, parents, school employees and other community members what is included in a high-quality education, there was remarkable consistency. There was also nothing complicated or extravagant about what they

mentioned; they simply want what is necessary to meet the educational and developmental needs of young people, and what schools all across the country (including some in Philadelphia) provide as the essential ingredients of effective education.

In our view, the needs of our children and youth must be at the absolute center of everything we do as a school system. Thus, we have used the input of city residents to create a **Philadelphia Student Bill of Rights**.<sup>68</sup> We believe that the Student Bill of Rights should serve as the guiding set of principles for all district decision-making. Additionally, it should provide our schools with a unifying vision of educational opportunity for our students. Young people, their families and their communities are entitled to know what to expect from their schools, and educators are entitled to know what they should be providing to students. Perhaps most important, the Student Bill of Rights would represent the commitment



# Philadelphia Student Bill of Rights

Every child and youth in Philadelphia has the right to a high-quality preK-12 education in their neighborhood public schools that includes a full and equal opportunity to: develop their mind, personality and talents; fulfill their potential; achieve their goals; improve the quality of their lives; and graduate from high school qualified for college, a living-wage job and thoughtful, responsible participation as a democratic citizen. These educational opportunities shall include:

1. Safe, clean, comfortable and inviting facilities that are conducive to learning and demonstrate respect for those who go to school and work there.
2. A healthy, nonviolent and supportive school climate for every member of the school community, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, disability or religion.
3. High-quality learning conditions in schools, including classes of a size that ensure individualized instruction, up-to-date classroom materials, fully staffed school libraries and modern classroom technology.
4. An academically rigorous curriculum that is enriched, well-rounded, engaging and culturally relevant.
5. Effective instruction provided by qualified, well-trained and well-supported staff who are given the time and resources necessary to address each student's development and particular learning needs, plan their lessons and collaborate with colleagues.
6. High-quality assessments that are aligned with the curriculum, use multiple methods for allowing students to fully demonstrate what they know and can do, and are used to improve the teaching and learning process.
7. Timely and effective intervention if students experience academic difficulties.
8. Developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that are applied fairly, support student learning and positive school climates, minimize student exclusion and the involvement of law enforcement to the greatest extent possible, and use preventive and restorative responses to bullying.
9. Holistic attention to students' intellectual, social, physical and emotional needs, including high-quality early childhood education programs for every child, art and music programs, recess, physical education, access to healthy food, and access to medical care and mental health services.
10. Meaningful opportunities, for students and their parents and families, to participate fully in the educational process and all other school and district decisions that significantly affect their lives and education.

## Community Voices

“I don’t have any rights in my school. The Student Bill of Rights would give us the right to the resources we need. It feels like this is our voice.”

—Khyeanna, 10th-grader

to each and every child that has for too long been lacking.

Moreover, we recognize that to truly transform our education system and create the excellent schools our children deserve, we will need the participation of the entire city, including the business sector, nonprofit organizations, the faith community and other government agencies. However, we cannot expect them to help and support our efforts unless they know where we are headed. The Student Bill of Rights should be our road map.

To implement the vision of the Philadelphia Student Bill of Rights, we have created **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan**, a 10-part strategy for creating a school system that meets the needs of students, families and communities. This plan represents the shared vision of the many youth, parents, teachers, school employees and other community members who played a role in its creation. It is designed to create real, transformative change in Philadelphia schools—the type of change that can provide hope where it’s lacking, that can create success where failure seemed inevitable, and that can reshape our communities. **The Philadelphia Community Education Plan** is grounded in our collective love for our city, and our firm belief that together we can build the great system of public schools that our people deserve.

### **1. High-Quality Learning Conditions: Ensure that every student has access to appropriate facilities and learning materials, and that every school is properly staffed.**

The very first thing that must be done to transform the School District of Philadelphia is to address the profound resource gaps that plague our students and our schools. Building repairs must be made. Improved learning materials must be provided. And schools must be staffed appropriately, with teachers (including English for speakers of other languages [ESOL] and special education teachers), paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, librarians, nurses, school psychologists and social workers. Children simply cannot be expected to learn well until they are provided the essential tools they need.

The district should immediately conduct a needs assessment to determine what is necessary to meet the standards set in the Student Bill of Rights. Then we must allocate our resources accordingly, both in the short term and in the long term, to ensure that no student is deprived of essential learning conditions.

### **2. Comprehensive Student Supports: Adopt a holistic approach to meeting student needs, and transform school buildings into community hubs.**

When students enter into school, they are not simply little brains that need to be filled with knowledge. They are whole beings, with a range of social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. In Philadelphia, those nonacademic needs can often be particularly acute and can present major barriers to high-quality teaching and learning. Moreover, we know from extensive research that any serious attempt at addressing educational inequities and improving schools in our city demands attention to the impact of poverty on students’ health and learning opportunities.<sup>69</sup>

Philadelphia must prioritize the development of a comprehensive support system to ensure that every student enters the classroom ready and able to learn. That starts by providing every child with the opportunity for a robust early childhood education, thus ensuring a strong beginning to the educational process.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, we should be incorporating a full array of wraparound services—such as before-school and

## Community Voices

“Making changes to the public school system should include making an investment in the whole child. We need to get back to some of the basic fundamentals that made for a well-rounded student. Fundamentals like providing music, sports, physical education, and art ... will help to meet the student’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. We need this in every public school.”

—Cheryl, teacher

after-school care, healthy meals and tutoring, in addition to the mental health services and medical care mentioned above—into every school, with a particular emphasis on schools serving the most high-need students.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, schools with low graduation rates should be required to develop specific interventions directed at supporting high-need students. For example, creating support groups for students with particular needs—such as immigrant students; students in foster care; pregnant and parenting students; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) students—can help create a support system in the school environment.<sup>71</sup>

### Example: Cincinnati Public Schools

In Cincinnati, every school has become a Community Learning Center (CLC) that provides year-round programming during and beyond the school day, including after-school and summer enrichment, comprehensive health services, adult education, early childhood education, college access, parent/family engagement, mentoring and tutoring. Unique partnerships are customized to each site. Since the program began in 2000, high school graduation rates have climbed from 51 percent to 83 percent, achievement gaps have narrowed considerably, and Cincinnati has become the highest-performing urban district in Ohio.

Sources: Community Schools Initiative: Cincinnati Community Learning Centers, at [www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Cincinnati%20Community%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Cincinnati%20Community%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf); McAdoo, Maisie, “Cincinnati Community Schools: A Model for New York?” (May 24, 2012), at [www.uft.org/insight/cincinnati-community-schools-model-new-york](http://www.uft.org/insight/cincinnati-community-schools-model-new-york).

Moreover, instead of closing schools with excess capacity, that space should be utilized to turn schools into community hubs.<sup>72</sup> Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, businesses, city agencies, universities, hospitals and other service providers, our schools can help revitalize communities by providing access for students, families and community members to health, safety and social services, as well as recreational, educational and cultural opportunities. These initiatives could open up additional funding opportunities at the local, state and federal levels, while bringing much-needed resources into our schools and communities.<sup>73</sup>

### 3. Enhanced Curriculum: Ensure that every student has access to an academically rigorous curriculum that is enriched, well-rounded, engaging and culturally relevant.

Unsuccessful schools expect students to adapt to their curriculum, and they fail to respond if students are not engaged by it. Successful schools recognize that while all students must be taught certain essential skills and knowledge, their curriculum must adapt to their students’ interests and needs. Too many of our schools have adopted the first approach, and the result has been widespread student disengagement.

Our students need the basic building blocks of learning, but they also need:

- Course content that builds on their pre-existing interests, experiences, knowledge and understanding;
- Curricula that makes them active—rather than passive—learners, including project-based learning that makes real-world connections to their lives, and group work that allows for collaborative learning and problem solving;
- Curricular diversity, including more exposure to subjects that have been de-emphasized in the post-No Child Left Behind era, such as the social sciences, art, music, and other creative and engaging subjects;
- Connections to their communities and their futures through community service, internships, field-based learning and academically rigorous Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs;
- Curricula that address their ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and celebrate their culture, history and community;

### Community Voices

“The curriculum is so stifling. There’s so much teaching to the test that there’s very little room for creativity. There’s also very little awareness in the curriculum.”

—Kia Hinton, parent of a 1st-grader, 3rd-grader and 8th-grader

## Example: Pittsburgh Public Schools

The school district in Pittsburgh has made a concentrated effort to improve both the rigor and the cultural relevance of its curriculum. The steps it has taken include: adapting the Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards to the district's approach of culturally responsive pedagogy; expanding access to Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, and providing wraparound support to help students succeed in them; creating African-American history and literature curricula; developing a culturally responsive arts education program; ensuring that every school offers art and music; and providing more-equitable access to high-level courses.

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools, "Equity: Getting to All; A Plan to Accelerate Student Achievement and Eliminate Racial Disparities in the Pittsburgh Public Schools."

- Access to high-level courses, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate;
- ESOL curricula that connect language instruction to high-quality content instruction;
- Access to recess and physical education; and
- The support necessary to ensure all students can be successful, including tutoring and after-school activities.

The curricula in some Philadelphia schools already have most, if not all, of these elements. But many do not, and that is holding the school district back. In fact, when we surveyed city residents on 12 potential school improvement strategies, the single highest priority they identified was improving district curricula.

While there are resources available to help us—including the Common Core State Standards—and many models that we can learn from,<sup>74</sup> ultimately it is up to us, the people of Philadelphia, to decide what curriculum is going to best meet the needs of our children and youth. Therefore, the district should appoint a task force composed of administrators, teachers, parents, students and other community members. This task force should be charged with:

- Conducting a comprehensive, districtwide needs assessment;
- Identifying promising models, both locally and nationally; and
- Developing recommendations for curricular enhancements.

Much like successful charter schools, individual district schools should then be provided the autonomy to implement a curriculum that meets the particular needs of its student body, so long as it complies with district and state standards. Again, that process should be done collaboratively, with administrators, teachers, parents and students being provided with meaningful opportunities to create an academically

rigorous curriculum that is enriched, well-rounded, engaging and culturally relevant.

### **4. Improved Instruction: Build collective instructional capacity in the district through enhanced professional development, equitable staffing, career advancement opportunities for teachers and internal leadership development.**

Expanding the collective capacity for high-quality teaching and learning must be a top priority if the district is going to achieve its full potential. We believe this will require several components designed to ensure that our schools are structured for optimal instructional performance.

First, there must be a renewed focus on meaningful professional development for all administrators, teachers and other school employees, in alignment with the Student Bill of Rights and the enhanced curriculum. Traditionally, the district has failed to invest appropriately in its teaching force.<sup>75</sup> As a result, there are considerable districtwide needs, not only with respect to general content and pedagogy but also as to strategies to address students' social, emotional and behavioral needs; integrating ESOL and CTE instruction; addressing students' special needs; cultural competence; classroom management; and positive and restorative approaches to school discipline, among others. Of course, the most effective professional development is that which is ongoing, happens inside the school, and is

## Community Voices

"They don't teach us about our history. We learn the same things every year: Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks and MLK."

—Giancarlos, 8th-grader

closely tied to the particular needs of students and educators in a school.<sup>76</sup> Thus, to facilitate intensive capacity-building, district leaders and administrators should continue to promote and expand the creation of Professional Learning Communities, which are teams of teachers—grouped by grade level, subject area or common interests—who dedicate in-school time to work together to bolster their practice.

Professional Learning Community members may, for example, observe each other in the classroom and provide feedback or reflection, engage in collaborative planning or problem-solving, look at and analyze student work and student data, or engage in peer-led professional development on topics identified by teachers themselves.<sup>77</sup> Our schools should be staffed and structured so that all teachers have sufficient time for individual lesson planning and collaborative professional development time every week. This type of intensive professional development, directed at building collective capacity, is critical to producing significant school improvement.<sup>78</sup>

Second, the district needs to continue its commitment to providing new teachers and struggling teachers with intensive assistance, mentoring, and training from skilled colleagues. Three years ago, the district and the PFT began a groundbreaking collaborative effort to institute a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. PAR ensures that: (a) new teachers and struggling teachers get the professional development and support they need from experienced, expert teachers; and (b) only capable, well-prepared teachers are offered permanent positions and retained.<sup>79</sup> PAR has been a great success here locally, as well as in other districts nationwide, and it should continue to be a priority for the district.<sup>80</sup>

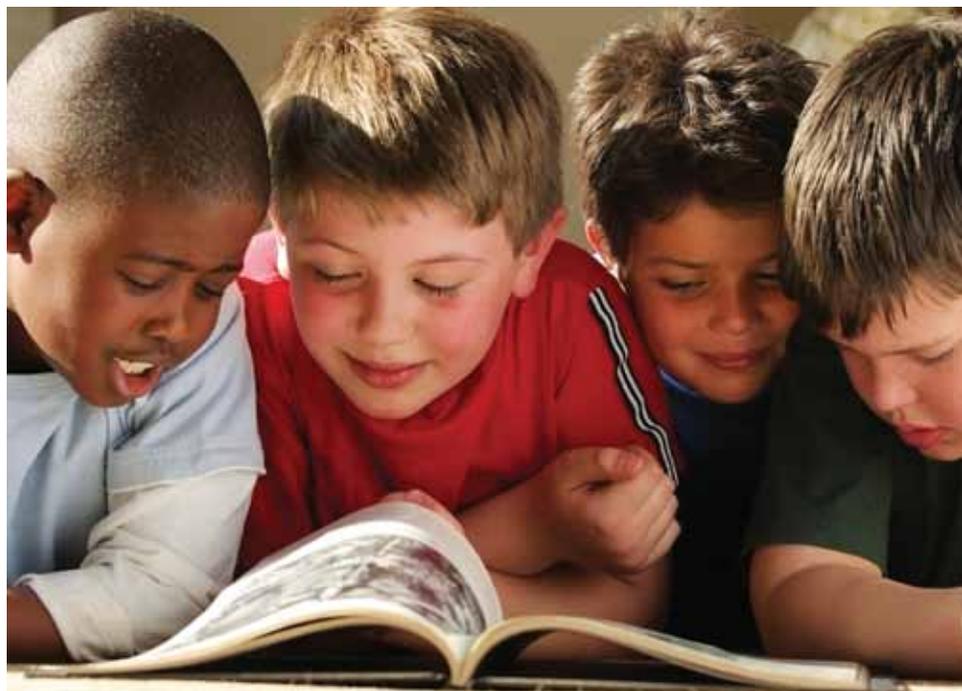
Third, the district must take appropriate steps to improve school staffing. Schools must be staffed more equitably, as many of our highest-need schools currently have disproportionately inexperienced staffs.<sup>81</sup> To address this problem, the district should create a series of incentives designed to attract and retain more experienced teachers and administrators to those hard-to-staff schools, including stipends, additional paraprofessionals, smaller class sizes, and increased time for preparation and training.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, to improve student-teacher relationships, the recruitment of teachers and administrators from local neighborhoods should be prioritized. And teachers, students and parents should be involved in the principal-hiring process to ensure that the person chosen will be the right fit for that particular community.<sup>83</sup>

Fourth, the district should create additional career advancement opportunities for teachers. Excellent teachers should be able to take on increased responsibility and leadership roles, such as mentoring new teachers or helping to develop curricula, and they should be recognized and compensated accordingly. Such initiatives have been found to help motivate and retain teachers, while also helping to improve overall teaching quality schoolwide.<sup>84</sup>

## Example: Sanger Unified School District

Sanger Unified is a high-poverty district in California's Central Valley. One of the key elements in moving from being one of the lowest-performing districts in the state to being a highly successful district was developing a collaborative schoolwide culture committed to change, highlighted by creating Professional Learning Communities. These Professional Learning Communities were critical to building the capacity of teachers and district staff, while also improving their ability to communicate, collaborate and commit to change.

Sources: Jane L. David and Joan E. Talbert, "Turning Around a High-Poverty School District: Learning from Sanger Unified's Success" (Nov. 2010), at [www.stanford.edu/group/suse-crc/cgi-bin/drupal/sites/default/files/Sanger-Report.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/group/suse-crc/cgi-bin/drupal/sites/default/files/Sanger-Report.pdf); Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, "Straight Talk on Teaching Quality: Six Game-Changing Ideas and What to Do About Them" (Dec. 2011).





Additionally, for teachers who aspire to additional leadership positions, the district should be creating a “teacher-to-principal pipeline.” We know that the most effective principals are those who have strong backgrounds as expert teachers of both students and adults, but we lack a clear strategy for identifying talented teachers in the district and cultivating their leadership abilities.<sup>85</sup> Thus, we propose the creation of a leadership program in which talented teachers can receive intensive training and can learn from expert principals in the district during full-time internships.<sup>86</sup> This, along with the other strategies mentioned, will allow the district to build much-needed internal teaching and leadership capacity, while also improving teacher retention.

**5. Performance Assessments: Develop a comprehensive local assessment system that provides more meaningful information and supports improved teaching and learning.**

Due in significant part to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the notion of student assessment has been severely distorted by the almost obsessive focus on standardized test scores. Like most states, Pennsylvania’s school accountability system reflects the narrow and misguided NCLB perspective, resulting in far too much emphasis on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment exams (PSSA) in our classrooms. While these tests can provide some data that is useful for very limited purposes, every young person, parent and teacher in Philadelphia knows they don’t come close to capturing what students know and can do. Moreover, Philadelphia should be attracting, developing and retaining the best teachers possible, and it simply will not be successful in this effort if it continues to make teaching more test-centric.

Philadelphia needs an assessment system that works for our students, teachers and communities; one that is far more robust, valid, reliable and fair. As President Obama has said, we need “assessments that don’t simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st-century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity.”<sup>87</sup> Thus, Philadelphia should take the lead in developing a comprehensive local performance assessment system that has the following characteristics:

- Aligned with the principles of the Student Bill of Rights and the enhanced curriculum described above;
- Based on multiple indicators of student learning from a variety of sources at multiple points in time, including: student portfolios; teacher observations; tests that include multiple-choice, short and longer constructed response items; essays; tasks and projects; laboratory work; and presentations;
- Valid and appropriate for a diverse student population, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Structured to provide useful diagnostic information to improve teaching and learning; and
- Publicly reported.<sup>88</sup>

**Example: New York Performance Standards Consortium**

The New York Performance Standards Consortium is a collection of 28 schools in New York City and state that has developed a proven practitioner-developed, student-focused performance assessment system. The group regards assessment as a whole-school-based accountability system that should be based on active learning, focus on professional development for educators, and use multiple ways for students to express and exhibit learning. These schools significantly outperform other New York City public schools while serving similar populations.

Sources: “Education for the 21st Century: Data Report on the New York Performance Standards Consortium” (2012); “An Alternative Approach to Gauge Readiness: Coalition of Small Schools in N.Y. Uses Performance Assessments,” Education Week (April 25, 2006).

This more comprehensive approach would allow for vastly improved assessment of standards that cannot be measured well by the PSSA, such as reasoning, communication, problem-solving, research, oral communication and applied learning. These are the skills that parents and students want their schools to promote, and we need our assessment system to help, rather than hinder, that learning process.

In the short term, Philadelphia will unfortunately continue to be subjected to requirements from the state and the federal government as it relates to the PSSA, and this new performance assessment approach will have to complement existing assessments. However, over the next several years, we anticipate that the district will be able to demonstrate the clear superiority of this approach in providing meaningful information for school improvement and accountability, and can become a leader in the state, as well as the country, in moving toward an assessment system that better meets the needs of all educational stakeholders.

## **6. Authentic Accountability: Create an accountability system that promotes school improvement through community involvement and comprehensive school-quality review.**

Given the severe limitations of the district’s current accountability system—the School Performance Index—and faults in that system that even the district has acknowledged,<sup>89</sup> we believe that Philadelphia schools need a more robust and authentic school accountability system that can drive school improvement and community building. Thus, rather than merely holding schools accountable for student outcomes, district leaders and administrators must also be held responsible for providing high-quality, equitable opportunities to learn. Students, parents and communities must be provided the information and means to participate effectively in the school improvement process and hold their local schools accountable. (Currently, we are able to get far more relevant and detailed information about the performance of the Eagles, Sixers and Phillies than about the performance of our school system.) Finally, there should be a simple, transparent process to identify any shortcomings in our schools and fix them.

First, we need to create a comprehensive indicator system to provide publicly reported evidence—both quantitative and qualitative—on the elements of the Student Bill of Rights, as well as student learning outcomes. For example, the types of data and evidence that should be easily accessible include: class size ranges and averages; access to art, music and physical education programs; availability of after-school programs; facility quality and features; availability of advanced curricula; teacher and principal experience and qualifications; teacher and principal turnover; access to social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors and nurses; access to staffed school libraries; school discipline data and methods; student and parent involvement; student attendance; graduation rates; and assessment results.

Second, we must recognize that schools don’t improve themselves. School improvement requires diligent, collaborative work among parents, students, teachers, administrators, school employees and the community. Therefore, every school should have an Excellence and Equity Committee with membership from these stakeholder groups that would be responsible for implementing the Student Bill of Rights and ensuring that all students in the school are being served equitably. These committees would be charged with monitoring the evidence collected above, soliciting input from school stakeholders (such as through student and parent surveys and open meetings), and implementing strategies for school improvement. Not only would the Excellence and Equity Committees drive the implementation of the Student Bill of Rights, they would also represent a powerful means to build stronger partnerships between schools and the communities they serve. For Philadelphia schools to get to where they need to be, we need to create more opportunities for all members of the school community to work in partnership for the good of our children and youth.

### **Community Voices**

“Involvement of students, parents and community in local schools has only been given lip service. This policy needs to be embraced and actualized.”

—JoAnn, 82-year-old community member

Third, the Student Bill of Rights must be enforceable by individual stakeholders, meaning students, their parents or guardians, and school employees should be able to identify problems and seek a remedy. The process should involve multiple levels, with the goal of resolving most matters at the lowest, non-adversarial level. The Excellence and Equity Committee would initially receive and attempt to address complaints. However, to ensure that serious problems are addressed, there would be additional avenues for individuals or groups to seek relief if needed, involving district-level bodies and, in the case of demonstrated systemic deficiencies, access to impartial arbiters.<sup>90</sup>

Fourth, the district should create a School Quality Review System in which teams of experts charged with ensuring compliance with the Student Bill of Rights assess individual school performance.

They would review a full array of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including those items

mentioned above.<sup>91</sup> They would perform their own independent analyses and produce publicly available reports on each school. Thus, rather than having our schools assessed largely on the basis of standardized test scores and other data, School Quality Review teams would involve someone actually visiting and observing a school, seeing evidence of student and teacher work over the course of time, examining a full array of data and other evidence, and assessing how resources are used and whether students are receiving equitable opportunities. While this approach is most common internationally, it has been piloted in several U.S. states and cities,<sup>92</sup> and has proved to be a highly effective strategy for enabling schools and the surrounding communities to get an objective look at their practices and for producing far more robust school improvement efforts.<sup>93</sup>

Finally, any evaluation of individual teachers must be brought into alignment with the values and standards described above. For example, the district must resist the trend—reflected in the

Pennsylvania Legislature’s recent passage of Act 82—toward increased use of standardized tests to evaluate teachers.<sup>94</sup> Between the Peer Assistance and Review Program and the Professional Development Plan (which includes a portfolio of a teacher’s work), Philadelphia already has a highly advanced system for evaluating teachers that is more reliable and provides far more useful information on teacher effectiveness than any standardized test that is available. Many of the proposals outlined above will only further augment that system. Thus, the district should work with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that any adjustments to the district’s teacher evaluation system are consistent with local priorities and promote high-quality teaching and learning.

## **7. Support for Struggling Schools: Develop the systemic infrastructure to provide assistance to schools in need of improvement.**

Even with all of our best efforts going forward, it is inevitable that some schools will still struggle to meet their obligations to their constituencies. Thus, the district must enhance its internal capacity to turn those struggling schools around from within. The foundation of that school improvement process should be the Excellence and Equity Committees, described above, which will be the primary mechanisms for identifying necessary corrective actions and interventions. To support and supplement their efforts, the School Quality Review teams should be responsible for providing targeted technical assistance to schools on the areas for improvement that they identify in their analyses. That should include:



- Identifying a set of research-based improvement strategies employed in the district, as well as across the country, that can be adapted by the individual school;
- Designating several high-performing district schools as professional development “lab sites” where teams from schools in need of improvement can observe and learn new practices that they can replicate; and
- Providing the resources and supports necessary to help the target schools develop and implement improvement plans in collaboration with their student, parent and community constituencies.<sup>95</sup>

This approach would allow the district to implement intensive supports and interventions that fit the particular needs of a school and produce dramatic improvements, without undercutting vital community institutions.

### **8. Truly Safe Schools: Adopt a new understanding of school safety and discipline that focuses on improving school climate.**

In a misguided attempt to improve school safety, Philadelphia has for many years applied an extremely harsh zero-tolerance disciplinary philosophy, which has included heavy reliance on student exclusion and law enforcement to address even developmentally normal student behavior. While these measures have not produced safer or more-effective schools, they have produced a variety of harmful outcomes, including:

- Overuse of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and disciplinary transfers;
- Unnecessary school-based arrests;
- Overly aggressive security and law enforcement tactics; and
- Excessive use of metal detectors and surveillance cameras.<sup>96</sup>

These failed school-safety strategies have created unhealthy school climates that have actually impeded student learning, wasted taxpayer dollars, and created a “school-to-prison pipeline” that has led to thousands of Philadelphia students being pushed out of school and criminalized unnecessarily.<sup>97</sup> It is clear that, after many years of this approach, getting tough on students has not worked, and it’s time we get smarter about creating safe schools. To the SRC’s credit—and following years of advocacy by youth, parents and other community members—they passed a new Student Code of Conduct in August 2012 that reduces the reliance on suspensions and expulsions in favor of other, more productive alternatives.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the BCG Plan has jeopardized that vitally important step forward,<sup>99</sup> and so the district is again at a crossroads as it relates to school discipline and school safety.

We, as youth, parents, teachers, school employees and other community members, strongly believe that we need to shift our understanding of what makes a school safe. We need to recognize that the best school-safety strategies have nothing to do

### **Examples: Denver Public Schools & Oakland Unified School District**

Schools in Denver and in Oakland, Calif., have implemented restorative justice as an alternative to zero-tolerance disciplinary approaches. Restorative justice is a set of principles and practices grounded in the values of showing respect, taking responsibility and strengthening relationships. When harm occurs, restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm and preventing reoccurrence through practices including restorative circles, group conferences, peer juries and mediations.

Research on these schools has found that restorative justice strengthened student-student and student-staff relationships in the school, improved academic performance, helped students and adults deal with violence and other challenges in their community, and produced significant drops in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.

Sources: Padres & Jovenes Unidos, “Books Not Bars: Students for Safe & Fair Schools” (Dec. 2011); Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice, “School-Based Restorative Justice as an Alternative to Zero-Tolerance Policies: Lessons from West Oakland” (Nov. 2010), at [www.law.berkeley.edu/files/11-2010\\_School-based\\_Restorative\\_Justice\\_As\\_an\\_Alternative\\_to\\_Zero-Tolerance\\_Policies.pdf](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/11-2010_School-based_Restorative_Justice_As_an_Alternative_to_Zero-Tolerance_Policies.pdf).

with harsh disciplinary consequences and police presence. Instead, they involve creating healthy, nonviolent and supportive environments where students can develop strong relationships with teachers, administrators and other school employees.<sup>100</sup>

Many essential elements of that approach have already been covered above, including:

- Smaller class sizes, with increased paraprofessional support;
- Increased access to social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors and nurses, as well as other wraparound services;
- A more engaging curriculum, delivered by well-trained and well-supported teachers; and
- School buildings that are well-maintained, inviting and not overly crowded.

These are the building blocks of truly safe schools. Additionally, our schools' disciplinary systems must treat students fairly and respectfully. We must recognize that while our young people face numerous challenges and sometimes fall off track or make mistakes, punishing them harshly or allowing them to fall through the cracks of the system hurts all of us, as well as them. Thus, the zero-tolerance approach must be eliminated entirely, the district must take the appropriate steps to ensure that the new discipline policy is implemented in all schools, and special emphasis should be placed on eliminating discipline disparities affecting students of color, students with disabilities and LGBTQ students.<sup>101</sup>

In addition, restorative justice programs (see box for description) should be implemented districtwide, and the development of peer mediation, counseling and mentoring programs should be encouraged. School staff should be trained on: the adverse consequences of school exclusion,

classroom management, adolescent development and relationship building, and conflict resolution. Also, the district must ensure both that it is addressing incidents of bullying appropriately—with nonpunitive measures—and that all schools are safe spaces for LGBTQ students.<sup>102</sup>

The district must also commit to relying less on law enforcement to address student behavior. Police and juvenile court involvement with students should always be the last resort, and should be used only when the school faces a serious threat that cannot be adequately addressed through other means. This approach should be reflected both in district policy and in the Memorandum of Understanding between the school district and the Philadelphia Police Department.

Together, these steps can reverse the downward spiral of harsh treatment and student alienation produced by our current approach to school safety, and we can begin to create healthier school climates that foster school success.



## **9. Citywide Collaboration: Convene multiple stakeholders to identify strategies for improving opportunities and outcomes for Philadelphia's children and youth.**

From 1982 to 2009, Pennsylvania increased its incarceration rate by more than 350 percent.<sup>103</sup> Per capita spending (adjusted for inflation) is now well over twice as much for police, the court system and the corrections system as it was in 1982.<sup>104</sup> Tragically, these dynamics have affected our city in particular. The state now spends more than \$500 million per year to incarcerate Philadelphians.<sup>105</sup> Most of these individuals were once students in our school district; students who we failed in many of the same ways that we continue to fail students today. Now, the state spends about \$33,000 per year to incarcerate each one of them, nearly three times as much as we spend on each child's education per year.<sup>106</sup>

We need to break this vicious cycle of overincarceration and undereducation. We call on Mayor Michael Nutter to launch a citywide Education Not Incarceration Commission to identify and implement strategies for improving educational and developmental opportunities for Philadelphia's children and youth. The commission should include representation from all the agencies and systems that intersect with children and youth—schools, police, juvenile courts, social services, mental health—as well as youth themselves, parents, community-based organizations and other subject-matter experts. It should be charged with (a) identifying community needs, strengths and underutilized resources; (b) addressing the oversized role of the justice system; and (c) developing a comprehensive strategy for improved allocation of our city's resources to meet the needs of our young people.<sup>107</sup> Among the topics that should be addressed are: ending the overpolicing of youth; improving access to wraparound services; expanding employment opportunities for youth; and improving access to cultural, organizational, athletic and academic enrichment activities.

We believe the city has the resources and the knowledge to make meaningful inroads into what may be the defining social justice issue of our time: our increasing willingness to invest in the incarceration of our people, rather than in their education and advancement. And we are confident that what will emerge out of this cross-systemic collaboration is a smarter approach to meeting the needs of youth, resulting in improved educational outcomes, reduced justice-system involvement, substantial economic benefits and healthier, safer communities.

## **10. Democratic Representation: Restore Philadelphia's local school board.**

It has been more than a decade since the people of Philadelphia have had a local school board. We want it back. And as recent events have shown, more than ever, we need it back.

### **Example: Connecticut**

Facing an unprecedented budget deficit and the fastest-growing prison population in the country, Connecticut policymakers implemented a justice reinvestment strategy. With nearly unanimous support in the Legislature, the state enacted a series of laws designed to shrink its oversized criminal justice system. Nearly \$30 million was saved, much of which was reinvested in community-based strategies for reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Probation violations were cut in half, the prison population was reduced more than in almost any other state, and the crime rate continued to drop.

Source: Justice Reinvestment, A Project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, at <http://justicereinvestment.org/states/connecticut>.

# Conclusion

We face a choice. That choice is whether we implement proven strategies that can create a better future for our children, or go forward with the BCG Plan and suffer the consequences. We must choose whether to finally make some meaningful headway around issues of low graduation rates and lagging student achievement, or continue to cling to failed policies and pay the price in the form of failing schools, deteriorating communities and widespread economic hardship.

Make no mistake: There can be no bystanders in this debate. The consequences are simply too great. Every single Philadelphian will be affected by the choice we make, and the implications it has on the quality of our neighborhoods, how our tax dollars are spent, and how safe and prosperous Philadelphia will be in the future.

We, the parents, youth, teachers, school employees and other community members of the PCAPS coalition have made our choice, and commit to building a brighter future for our city and our people. We ask only that our policymakers make the same commitment to us.



# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Denvir, Daniel, "Who's Killing Philly Public Schools? Underfunded. Overburdened. About to Be Sold for Scrap" (5/3/12), Philadelphia City Paper; Denvir, Daniel, "Money Talks: And When Jeremy Nowak is Paying, Philly Schools Have to Listen" (7/5/12), Philadelphia City Paper. For example, the William Penn Foundation raised the funds to pay Boston Consulting Group's \$4.4 million in fees. Graham, Kristen, "BCG Report on Philadelphia Schools Draws Mixed Reaction" (8/4/12), Philadelphia Inquirer, at [http://articles.philly.com/2012-08-04/news/33020787\\_1\\_charter-school-growth-charter-conversions-philadelphia-school-partnership](http://articles.philly.com/2012-08-04/news/33020787_1_charter-school-growth-charter-conversions-philadelphia-school-partnership).
- <sup>2</sup> The BCG Plan refers to three documents, in particular: Boston Consulting Group; Transforming Philadelphia's Public Schools: Key Findings and Recommendations (Aug. 2012); The School District of Philadelphia, A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia's Public Schools (4/22/12); The School District of Philadelphia, Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017. They are discussed as one entity to ease comprehension, and also because it is as yet unclear what the relationship is among the documents.
- <sup>3</sup> Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 6. Note that the budget deficit was subsequently listed as \$1.3 billion in the district's five-year financial plan, supra note 2.
- <sup>4</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017, supra note 2, at 7; Gailey, Jackie, et al., "Sweeping Changes and School Closings Proposed for Philly" (4/24/12), NBC10 Philadelphia, at <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Sweeping-Changes-Proposed-for-Philly-Schools-148709425.html>.
- <sup>5</sup> The Boston Consulting Group document, supra note 2, relies heavily on the use of standardized test scores to guide decision-making around school accountability, school closures, principal evaluation, and teacher evaluation.
- <sup>6</sup> Id. at 33.
- <sup>7</sup> Id. at 40.
- <sup>8</sup> Id. at 48, 87-88.
- <sup>9</sup> Id. at 86.
- <sup>10</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia's Public Schools, supra note 2, at 13-15.
- <sup>11</sup> Results as of December 2, 2012.
- <sup>12</sup> Kintisch, Baruch, "Ignoring Funding Problems = Bad Education Policies for Philadelphia" (8/8/12), Philadelphia Inquirer.
- <sup>13</sup> Id.
- <sup>14</sup> Baker, Bruce D. & Corcoran, Sean P., The Stealth Inequities of School Funding: How State and Local School Finance Systems Perpetuate Inequitable Student Spending (Sept. 2012), Center for American Progress, at 7-8.
- <sup>15</sup> Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 34. Renaissance charter schools are estimated by BCG to cost \$800-1000 more per student. Id.
- <sup>16</sup> This relies on BCG estimates, including an average of \$900 per Renaissance student. Id. Enrollment figures were obtained from: The School District of Philadelphia, FY 2012-13 Consolidated Budget (April 2012), at 17.
- <sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Zimmer, Ron, et al., Evaluating the Performance of Philadelphia's Charter Schools (March 2008), RAND, Research for Action, and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; Credo at Stanford University, Charter School Performance in Pennsylvania (April 2011), at [http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/PA%20State%20Report\\_20110404\\_FINAL.pdf](http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/PA%20State%20Report_20110404_FINAL.pdf). Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Education recently announced that 44 of the 77 charter schools it had classified as making AYP in 2011-12 in fact fell short of the targets that traditional public schools have to make. "PSBA Investigation: PDE Using Unapproved Formula to Artificially Inflate Charter School AYP Numbers" (10/5/12), at <http://www.psba.org/news-publications/headlines/details.asp?id=4017>. For national analysis of charter school performance, see, e.g., Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States (June 2009), Stanford University; Bracey, Gerald W., Charter Schools' Performance and Accountability: A Disconnect (May 2005), Education Policy Studies Laboratory, at <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/charter-schools-performance-and-accountability-a-disconnect>; Miron, Gary, et al., Evaluating the Impact of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: A Longitudinal Look at the Great Lakes States (June 2007), Education Policy Research Unit, at <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/EPSL-0706-236-EPRU-exec.pdf>; see generally Ravitch, Diane, The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education (2010), New York: Basic Books.
- <sup>18</sup> Charters are provided numerous structural advantages in Pennsylvania, including: they do not have to accept all students, they do not have to provide transportation, and they are exempted from special education requirements. As an example of how this has played out to the disadvantage of students, when Clymer Elementary was closed and re-opened as a Mastery Charter School, their contract included a provision that specified that they would only have to educate the most challenged students for one year before they would be reassigned to traditional public schools. See also Mezzacappa, Dale, "Fed's Denial of Charter AYP Rule Change Will Allow Closer Philly School Comparisons" (11/27/12), The Philadelphia Public School Notebook, at <http://thenotebook.org/blog/125384/feds-denial-ayp-rule-change-allow-closer-school-comparisons>. Overall, Philadelphia charters serve much lower percentages of severely disabled students and English language learners. Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 34.
- <sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Education Law Center, "State Budget 2011-12," at <http://www.elc-pa.org/budget2011.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, FY 2012-13 Consolidated Budget, supra note 16, at 38. The Governor's budget reduced total state funding for PreK-12 education by nearly 10% - over \$1 billion - and over 25% of the proposed cuts fell on the School District of Philadel-

phia. School District of Philadelphia, “Educational Impact of Governor Tom Corbett’s Proposed Budget Plan” (3/9/11), at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/zM/HY/zMHY19Zxx8l4VWAYackRRA/11-03-09-Impact-on-SDP-of-Corbett-Prop-FY12-PA-Bgt-SDP-PR.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017, supra note 2, at 2; Kintisch, supra note 12.

<sup>22</sup> Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 33.

<sup>23</sup> Id. at 35.

<sup>24</sup> Id. at 113-14.

<sup>25</sup> State revenues were \$27.1 billion in 2011-12 and were again projected to be \$27.1 billion in 2012-13, compared to \$25.1 billion in 08-09, \$24.6 billion in 2009-10, and \$26.1 billion in 2010-11. See Governor’s Budget Office, at [http://www.budget.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/current\\_and\\_proposed\\_commonwealth\\_budgets/4566](http://www.budget.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/current_and_proposed_commonwealth_budgets/4566).

<sup>26</sup> Berger, Dan & Zellman, Hannah, “PA’s Prison Juggernaut” (10/9/12), Philadelphia Inquirer, at [http://articles.philly.com/2012-10-09/news/34343785\\_1\\_prison-population-prison-problem-prison-system](http://articles.philly.com/2012-10-09/news/34343785_1_prison-population-prison-problem-prison-system).

<sup>27</sup> Decarcerate PA, Education Not Incarceration: Resisting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, at [http://decarceratepa.info/sites/default/files/education\\_not\\_incarceration\\_factsheet.pdf](http://decarceratepa.info/sites/default/files/education_not_incarceration_factsheet.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Graham, Kristen A., supra note 1.

<sup>29</sup> This is based on 2011-12 state revenues increasing 3.6% annually, which is the average annual increase for the previous 20 years. The School District of Philadelphia, “Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2011-12 -- Community Budget Meetings” (May 2011), at 24, at [http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/VW/2D/VW2DdMdbQH8pjHaF\\_L04nA/11-05-31-SDP-FY12-Proposed-Budget.pdf](http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/VW/2D/VW2DdMdbQH8pjHaF_L04nA/11-05-31-SDP-FY12-Proposed-Budget.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> This is based on the average of the three counties’ per-pupil allotments for 2009-10. Kintisch, supra note 12; The School District of Philadelphia, FY 2012-13 Consolidated Budget, supra note 16, at 17.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Lower Merion School District had a per-pupil allotment of \$23,115 in 09-10, compared to less than \$15,000 for Bucks, Montgomery, and Delaware, and \$12,222 for Philadelphia. Kintisch, supra note 12; Mitra, Dana, Pennsylvania’s Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education, at 8, at [http://www.elc-pa.org/BestInvestment\\_Full\\_Report\\_6.27.11.pdf](http://www.elc-pa.org/BestInvestment_Full_Report_6.27.11.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> Supra note 16. Included is an allowance of 5% SDP student enrollment in charters.

<sup>33</sup> The student population in traditional public schools has decreased by 5.4% during those two years, but that is far less than the reduction in the teaching force. The School District of Philadelphia, FY 2012-13 Consolidated Budget, supra note 16, at 17.

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

<sup>35</sup> Id.

<sup>36</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017, supra note 2, at 2.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Education Law Center, “Basic Education Funding and Accountability: Year One Results,” at [http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/](http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads%202009/Act61Results.pdf)

[downloads%202009/Act61Results.pdf](http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads%202009/Act61Results.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Education Law Center, Principles for Charter School Reform, at [http://www.elc-pa.org/ELC\\_PrinciplesforCharterSchool-Reform\\_9.20.12.pdf](http://www.elc-pa.org/ELC_PrinciplesforCharterSchool-Reform_9.20.12.pdf); Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 36-37.

<sup>39</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia’s Public Schools, supra note 2, at 11.

<sup>40</sup> Boston Consulting Group, supra note 2, at 36-37.

<sup>41</sup> Id. at 44-55.

<sup>42</sup> Id. at 87.

<sup>43</sup> Id. at 84, 91.

<sup>44</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia’s Public Schools, supra note 2, at 13-15.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Saltman, Kenneth, J., Urban School Decentralization and the Growth of “Portfolio Districts” (June 2010), Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

<sup>46</sup> See supra note 17.

<sup>47</sup> See supra note 18.

<sup>48</sup> See supra note 15; Limm, David, “Among Largest Cities, Philadelphia Has Highest Share of Charter Students” (11/14/12), at <http://thenotebook.org/blog/125329/among-largest-cities-philadelphia-highest-share-charters>.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Committee on Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Public Education (Michael Hout and Stuart W. Elliott, Editors), Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education (2011), National Research Council; Ravitch, supra note 17; Darling-Hammond, Linda, The Flat World and Education: How America’s Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future (2010), New York: Teachers College Press; Advancement Project, Test, Punish, and Push Out: How “Zero Tolerance” and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth Into the School-to-Prison Pipeline (March 2010), at 13, 28; Nichols, S. & Berliner, D., Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America’s Schools (2007), Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Advancement Project, supra note 49; Forum for Education and Democracy, Creating a National Culture of Learning: The Forum for Education & Democracy’s Recommendations for the Reauthorization of ESEA, at 7, at [http://www.forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/FED\\_Short\\_Paper\\_on\\_ESEA.pdf](http://www.forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/FED_Short_Paper_on_ESEA.pdf); Frankenberg, Erika, et al., Choice Without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards (Feb. 2010), Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA; Lipman, Pauline, et al., Students as Collateral Damage: Preliminary Study of Renaissance 2010 School Closings in the Midsouth (Feb. 2007).

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., supra note 45.

<sup>52</sup> Sebring, Penny B., et al., The Essential Supports for School Improvement (Sept. 2006), Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago; Fullan, Michael, Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole School Reform (2011), Centre for Strategic Education.

<sup>53</sup> These results are likely due to the combination of budget cuts, staff reductions, the hiring of less experienced teachers and non-certified teachers, and the effects of greater emphasis on high-stakes tests. See supra note 49.

<sup>54</sup> Kintisch, *supra* note 12.

<sup>55</sup> Action United, *Unequal Resource Distribution in Philadelphia Schools* (forthcoming).

<sup>56</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, *Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017*, *supra* note 2, at 2; Boston Consulting Group, *supra* note 2, at 48, 87-88.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., Sebring et al., *supra* note 52.

<sup>58</sup> See *supra* note 53.

<sup>59</sup> See e.g., Beabout, Brian, *Portfolio Management Districts and Rebuilding Inequality* (2011), *Childhood Education*: 87(5).

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., *Advancement Project*, *supra* note 49.

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Testimony of Kate M. Shaw, Executive Director, Research for Action, Philadelphia City Council's Committee on Education (11/26/12).

<sup>62</sup> See, e.g., Bridgeland, John M. et al., *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* (March 2006), Civic Enterprises, at <http://www.ignitelearning.com/pdf/TheSilentEpidemic3-06FINAL.pdf>; Sum, Andrew et al., *The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers* (Oct. 2009), Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, at [http://www.americaspromise.org/-/media/Files/Resources/Consequences\\_of\\_Dropping\\_Out\\_of\\_High\\_School.ashx](http://www.americaspromise.org/-/media/Files/Resources/Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.ashx).

<sup>63</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, *A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia's Public Schools*, *supra* note 2, at 13-15.

<sup>64</sup> See, e.g., *Broader, Bolder Approach to Education*, "The Inconvenient Truths About Turning Around Schools," at <http://www.boldapproach.org/inconvenient-truths-school-turn-around>; Trujillo, Tina & Renee, Michelle, *Democratic School Turnarounds: Pursuing Equity and Learning from Evidence* (Oct. 2012), National Education Policy Center; Response of Tina Trujillo & Michelle Renee to Secretary Duncan, *The Research on Turnarounds Doesn't Show What Arne Duncan Thinks it Shows* (10/8/12) National Education Policy Center; American Federation of Teachers, *Closing Schools to Improve Student Achievement: What the Research and Researchers Say* (Oct. 2012); *Communities for Excellent Public Schools*, *Our Communities Left Behind: An Analysis of the Administration's School Turnaround Policies* (July 2010).

<sup>65</sup> For example, during the 2010-11 school year, Clymer Elementary, Gratz High School, Olney High School, and Birney Elementary were all converted to Renaissance charters, leading to the layoff of 1,500 employees. Yet those conversions resulted in severe reductions in direct services to students and marked the end of the district's reduced class size initiative.

<sup>66</sup> The annual benefit of all these school closings is only expected to be \$33 million. The School District of Philadelphia, *Proposed Five-Year Financial Plan - Fiscal Years 2013-2017*, *supra* note 2, at 7.

<sup>67</sup> Youth United for Change & Advancement Project, *Zero Tolerance in Philadelphia: Denying Educational Opportunities and Creating a Pathway to Prison* (Jan. 2011), at 10, [http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/68a6ec942d603a5d27\\_rim6ynnir.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/68a6ec942d603a5d27_rim6ynnir.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> The Student Bill of Rights was also informed by the following: Rogers, John, et al., *The Education Bill of Rights: Ensuring All California*

*Students a High Quality Education*, UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access & UCLA's Program in Public Interest Law and Policy, at [http://www.edsource.org/assets/files/convening/IDEA\\_brief.pdf](http://www.edsource.org/assets/files/convening/IDEA_brief.pdf); Center for Law and Education, *Educational Bill of Rights* (2009), at <http://www.cleweb.org/sites/default/files/EQBR.FullVersion.pdf>; Chicago Teachers Union, *The Schools Chicago's Students Deserve: Research-Based Proposals to Strengthen Elementary and Secondary Education in the Chicago Public Schools* (Feb. 2012); *The Dignity in Schools Campaign*, *A Model Code on Education and Dignity: Presenting a Human Rights Framework for Schools* (Aug. 2012), at [http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC\\_Model\\_Code.pdf](http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Model_Code.pdf); Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, *When Our Eyes Are Knocked Open: The State of Education in Philadelphia* (5/8/12), Summary Report from Town Hall Meeting, at [http://www.enontab.org/pdf/Town\\_Hall\\_Report\\_3-%205-21-12.pdf](http://www.enontab.org/pdf/Town_Hall_Report_3-%205-21-12.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> For a collection of resources, see *Broader, Bolder Approach to Education*, "Annotated Bibliography," at [http://www.boldapproach.org/uploads/Annotated\\_BBA\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://www.boldapproach.org/uploads/Annotated_BBA_Bibliography.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> For examples, see *Broader Bolder Approach to Education*, "Comprehensive Strategies," at <http://www.boldapproach.org/comprehensive-strategies>.

<sup>71</sup> Youth United for Change, *Pushed Out: Youth Voices on the Dropout Crisis in Philadelphia* (Feb. 2011).

<sup>72</sup> See generally 21st Century School Fund, at <http://www.21csf.org/cs%2Dhome/>; see also American Federation of Teachers, "Community Schools," at <http://aft.org/issues/schoolreform/commschools/index.cfm>.

<sup>73</sup> For example, the Ohio Department of Education has developed a Medicaid Schools Program that provides federal matching funding for certain school-based services. See <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1001&ContentID=29574&Content=108706>.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., School Redesign Network at Stanford University & Justice Matters, *High Schools for Equity: Policy Supports for Student Learning in Communities of Color* (2007), at [http://srnleads.org/resources/publications/pdf/hsfe/hsfe\\_report.pdf](http://srnleads.org/resources/publications/pdf/hsfe/hsfe_report.pdf); Saunders, Marisa & Chrisman, Christopher A., *Linking Learning to the 21st Century: Preparing All Students for College, Career, and Civic Participation* (4/7/11), at <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/linking-learning>; Oakes, Jeannie & Saunders, Marisa, *Multiple Pathways: Bringing School to Life* (July 2009), UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access; see generally writings of Lisa Delpit, Pedro Noguera, and Gloria Ladson-Billings.

<sup>75</sup> *Education Resource Strategies, Strategic Professional Development Review of the School District of Philadelphia: School Year 2007-08*.

<sup>76</sup> Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, *Straight Talk on Teaching Quality: Six Game-Changing Ideas and What to Do About Them* (Dec. 2011), at 18-19; see also Fullan, *supra* note 52.

<sup>77</sup> Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, *supra* note 76.

<sup>78</sup> *Id.*; Forum for Education and Democracy, *Effective Teachers, High Achievers: Investing in a Teaching Profession*, at [http://forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/Teaching\\_Brief\\_1009\\_v1.pdf](http://forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/Teaching_Brief_1009_v1.pdf), at 5.

<sup>79</sup> American Federation of Teachers, "Peer Assistance and Review," at <http://aft.org/issues/teaching/par/index.cfm>.

<sup>80</sup> Harvard Graduate School of Education, "A User's Guide to Peer As-

sistance and Review,” at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/>.

<sup>81</sup> Action United, *supra* note 55.

<sup>82</sup> *Id.*; Forum for Education and Democracy, *supra* note 78, at 3; American Federation of Teachers, “Hard-to-Staff Schools,” at <http://aft.org/issues/teaching/hardtostaff/index.cfm>; Action United, *Revolving Doors: Findings from Philadelphia’s Highest-Poverty Schools* (April 2012).

<sup>83</sup> *Id.*

<sup>84</sup> Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, *supra* note 76, at 3-4.

<sup>85</sup> Formerly, there was a program filling this need called Academy for Leadership in Philadelphia Schools (ALPS).

<sup>86</sup> Forum for Education and Democracy, *supra* note 78, at 6. For a description of successful leadership programs using this design, see: Darling-Hammond, Linda, et al., *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs* (2007), Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, at [http://www.srnleads.org/data/pdfs/sls/sls\\_exec\\_summ.pdf](http://www.srnleads.org/data/pdfs/sls/sls_exec_summ.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> President Barack Obama, “Remarks to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce” (3/10/09).

<sup>88</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda & Adamson, Frank, *Beyond Basic Skills: The Role of Performance Assessments in Achieving 21st Century Standards of Learning* (2010), Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education; Forum on Educational Accountability, Assessment and Accountability for Improving Schools and Learning: Principles and Recommendations for Federal Law and State and Local Systems (Aug. 2007); Forum for Education and Democracy, *Beyond Standardized Tests: Investing in a Culture of Learning* (2009), at 3, at [http://www.forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/Learning\\_Brief\\_1209\\_v1.pdf](http://www.forumforeducation.org/sites/default/files/u48/Learning_Brief_1209_v1.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> Woodall, Martha, “District Seeks New Index to Rate School Performance” (11/1/12), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, at [http://articles.philly.com/2012-11-01/news/34858814\\_1\\_charter-school-charter-expansions-paul-kihn](http://articles.philly.com/2012-11-01/news/34858814_1_charter-school-charter-expansions-paul-kihn).

<sup>90</sup> Alliance for Educational Justice, *Youth SUCCESS Act* (2011) [on file with the authors].

<sup>91</sup> See, e.g., *School Accountability: A Broader, Bolder Approach* (June 2009), a Report of the Accountability Committee of the “Broader Bolder Approach to Education” Campaign; Forum for Education and Democracy, *Creating a National Culture of Learning*, at 8; Ratner, Gary & Neill, Monty, *Integrating ‘Helping Schools Improve’ With ‘Accountability’ Under ESEA: The Key Role For Qualitative, As Well As Quantitative, Evaluations And The Use Of ‘Inspectorates’* (Working Paper No. 2, Dec. 15, 2009), at <http://www.fairtest.org/k-12/accountability>.

<sup>92</sup> Forum for Education and Democracy, *supra* note 88, at 4-5.

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

<sup>94</sup> Mathis, William, *Research-Based Options for Education Policymaking: Teacher Evaluation* (Sept. 2012), National Education Policy Center; Darling-Hammond, Linda, *Creating a Comprehensive System for Evaluating and Supporting Effective Teaching* (2012), Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education; Corcoran, Sean P., *Can Teachers be Evaluated by their Students’ Test Scores? Should They Be? The*

*Use of Value-Added Measures of Teacher Effectiveness in Policy and Practice* (2010), in collaboration with Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University; Hinchey, Patricia H., *Getting Teacher Assessment Right: What Policymakers Can Learn from Research* (Dec. 2010) National Education Policy Center; Fullan, *supra* note 52; Burris, Carol C. & Welner, Kevin G., *Letter to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan Concerning Evaluation of Teachers and Principals*, National Education Policy Center.

<sup>95</sup> New York City Working Group on School Transformation, *The Way Forward: From Sanctions to Supports* (Apr. 2012).

<sup>96</sup> Youth United for Change & Advancement Project, *supra* note 67.

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*

<sup>98</sup> Graham, Kristen A., “New Code of Conduct in Philadelphia Schools Gives Principals More Leeway” (8/17/12), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, at [http://articles.philly.com/2012-08-18/news/33249350\\_1\\_dress-code-new-code-principals](http://articles.philly.com/2012-08-18/news/33249350_1_dress-code-new-code-principals).

<sup>99</sup> Breaking up the district into “achievement networks” and expanding the charter school sector would dramatically reduce the impact of the new policy, and may make it obsolete.

<sup>100</sup> See, e.g., Steinberg, Matthew P. et al., *Student and Teacher Safety in Chicago Public Schools: The Roles of Community Context and School Social Organization* (May 2011), Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

<sup>101</sup> Youth United for Change & Advancement Project, *supra* note 67; Advancement Project, Alliance for Educational Justice & Gay-Straight Alliance Network, *Two Wrongs Don’t Make a Right: Why Zero Tolerance is Not the Solution to Bullying* (June 2012), at 14-15, at [http://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/APJ-005\\_D5-FINALsmall.pdf](http://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/APJ-005_D5-FINALsmall.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> Based on data from Bureau of Justice Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> NAACP, “Misplaced Priorities: Philadelphia,” at <http://www.naacp.org/pages/philadelphia>.

<sup>106</sup> NAACP, *Misplaced Priorities: Over Incarcerate, Under Educate* (May 2011), at 24, at [http://naacp3cdn.net/ecea56adeef3d84a28\\_azsm639wz.pdf](http://naacp3cdn.net/ecea56adeef3d84a28_azsm639wz.pdf); *supra* note 30.

<sup>107</sup> See Freeman, Jim, “More Books, Fewer Bars: Improving Educational Outcomes and Reducing Youth Involvement in the Justice System through Targeted Investment in Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative Efforts” (March 2012), *Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court: A Collection of Reports to Inform the National Leadership Summit on School Justice Partnerships*.



