

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 120628)

RESOLUTION

Calling upon Council's Committee on Education to hold hearings to determine the best, most efficient and effective form of governance and accountability for the Philadelphia School District.

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia School District is the ninth largest school system in America with 249 public schools and 80 Charter Schools serving roughly 192,000 students; and

WHEREAS, On December 21, 2001, the Secretary of Education found the Philadelphia School District to be in distress, thereby suspending the powers of the Board of Education, and placing a "School Reform Commission" (hereinafter "SRC") in charge of the District; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in April 2002 and continuing to the present day, the SRC has annually proposed the closure or privatization of various schools throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception the SRC has had three Superintendents and currently has an interim Superintendent all of whom have attempted to "turn-around" the performance of the District resulting in minimal increases in academic performance and continually poor managerial and financial performance; and

WHEREAS, No mechanism has been established to hold the SRC accountable for their actions to City Council or the citizens of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the country and throughout the world cities of similar size utilize school district governance structures that provide for accountability and academic performance far greater than what we currently experience in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Globally, the United States ranks 14th in academic performance, however, it has the highest annual expenditure per student as a percentage of GDP; and

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WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ranks 22nd nationally in education and Philadelphia ranks 477th out of 545 school districts throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Amongst urban school districts of similar size, Philadelphia ranks in the bottom three with only Baltimore which is a state-run district and Detroit which is a joint city and state run district with worse performance; and

WHEREAS, The governance of the Philadelphia School District may be better managed at the local level rather than at the Commonwealth level; and

WHEREAS, City Council through imposition of taxes and through grants provides the School District with hundreds of millions of dollars annually; and

WHEREAS, The future of public education is at stake and the need has never been greater to identify and adopt best practices that increase accountability, academic outcomes and equality for all children and families in Philadelphia; therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it is hereby calling upon Council's Committee on Education to hold hearings to determine the best, most efficient and effective form of governance and accountability for the Philadelphia School District.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-first of June, 2012.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Oh and Blackwell

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Oh, Blackwell, Green, Quiñones Sánchez, Greenlee, Kenney, Goode, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers Squilla, Bass, Johnson, O'Brien, Jones, Henon, Tasco, Reynolds Brown and O'Neill