

The Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools Supports the Families and Teachers of Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences

Members of the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools fully support the families of Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences students in exercising their legal right to opt their children out of standardized testing. It is imperative that parents and guardians be fully aware of the rights available to them as they make important educational decisions for their children. Parents and teachers work in close partnership to meet the individual needs of Philadelphia's students. *Therefore, educators and administrators MUST be able to share information about ALL rights, including the right to opt out of standardized testing, without fear of punishment, harassment, or retribution.*

Given the harm caused by the systematic defunding of public education under the Corbett administration, we request the Pennsylvania Department of Education revisit the \$58.3 million allocation for high-stakes testing. Those funds would be better spent on proven research-based supports that could actually improve educational outcomes for children in the Commonwealth. Reducing class sizes, reopening and professionally staffing shuttered school libraries, and providing unrestricted access to certified-school nurses and counselors must take precedence over boosting the bottom line of multi-national testing companies.

The current regimen of toxic-testing punishes students—particularly those living in poverty, English language learners, and special needs students. Pennsylvania's children do not come standardized. Neither are the resources available to our school districts standardized. The skills our children need to succeed in the twenty first century are not those that can be measured on a multiple choice, standardized test. As citizens of the Commonwealth, we request that Governor Wolf and Education Secretary Rivera: 1) make passage of an equitable education funding formula their first priority; 2) support a rich curriculum, and abundant opportunities for ALL students to develop their INDIVIDUAL talents; and 3) unshackle our schools from high-stakes accountability metrics.

We request the School District of Philadelphia and the State Department of Education not withhold, or attempt to suppress in any way, information about parental education rights, including the right of parents to opt children out of testing. To place obstacles limiting parent access to that information,

or to issue threats real or implied against educators who choose to share that information, would be doing a tremendous disservice to Philadelphia's students, who are among the most vulnerable citizens of our Commonwealth.

The parents, students, and teachers at Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences are to be commended for standing up for the type of whole child-centered education our children deserve. The parents and school professionals of the Alliance applaud them for being in the vanguard of this growing national movement.