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SRC Testimony
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[This Has Become Institutionalized Child Abuse](#)

Oh the irony of this week's press release touting Dell's new School Report Cards, as if the state of our schools isn't obvious. They've all been put on the threatened or the endangered lists, haven't they? We cannot deny the reality of our situation. Politicians from BOTH sides of the aisle created it with calculated intent, and the SRC let it roll out as planned. Our children's schools were barely functional, yet you opened them anyway. AND you continue to judge them with your silly report cards and biased tests, glibly promising 100% proficiency while cutting wide swaths through the ranks of our qualified teachers and providing a mere \$40 per child per year for supplies-knowing, and surely you must know, that new textbooks cost an average of \$80 apiece.

In Pennsylvania some districts are more "equal" than others, and until we get a proper funding formula in place, I won't lay that at your doorstep. BUT, in Philadelphia, some schools are more "equal" than others. I spoke last week on the role of equity in Finland's educational success. Until we have equity in funding at both the state and the local level, we are perpetuating a destructive system of haves and have-nots.

By trying to fill the gaps, parents at "have" schools implicitly teach their children that those with social capital will prevail. Constant churn makes it hard to stop and think about schools in poor communities and how they are doing-maybe that's the point. However well intentioned, these actions are eroding public education for all. Next year, Masterman's budget gap is well over a half million dollars. So what exactly did fundraising and volunteer hours get us? A deeper hole.

Operating public schools with insufficient PUBLIC money also allows inappropriate influence by funders who use manufactured crises to set the stage for pet projects that further privatization goals. Token beams of sunshine funneled through the Philadelphia School Partnership to a short list of "innovators" function as a convenient distraction from the maelstrom of disinvestment taking place. A

select few are given what they need to succeed in order to ensure that all the rest appear failures.

You as members of the SRC make choices about how best to direct the limited money you have. Your responsibility is to our children. Is it responsible to increase class sizes to 40+ while using test scores to call our students failures? Is it responsible to lay off our most experienced teachers while spending \$90,000 to hire a TFA recruitment expert? Is it responsible to open a “virtual academy” while stripping supportive adults from the halls of bricks and mortar schools like Bartram?

No one here is being responsible. Not the governor, not the mayor, and not you. Parents, teachers, and students must unite and start a campaign of civil disobedience. We cannot survive another year of deprivation. This has become institutionalized child abuse, and it must stop.