

June 30, 2015 Transparency & the Budget

Good evening everyone. My name is Karel Kilimnik. I am a retired teacher and a member of the Alliance for Phila. Public Schools. I am testifying on Transparency and the budget. Tonight's meeting is about approving the budget and it turns out a contract for termite extermination. I have been checking the district website since the last SRC meeting to see the Resolutions. They did not appear until yesterday afternoon. SRC 1, 2, and 3 all state that these are separate documents. Why aren't their links included? Tomorrow's TRAN meeting has no explanation about the purpose of that meeting. How do you expect the public to ask questions about resolutions when they are not posted in a timely manner?

The SRC has a long history of excluding public comment ever since its creation in 2001 with the one appointed commissioner bent on handing out contracts to law firms and public relations outlets. Not much has changed since then except conditions have worsened. The SRC has escalated the lack of trust ever since you terminated the PFT contract on Oct. 6th and refused to allow public comment until after you passed the one resolution. Philadelphia voters showed their lack of trust when they voted on May 19th to disband the SRC.

I attended many of the Facilities Management meetings held before the actual closing of 24 schools in 2013. Testimonies were traumatic as students, parents, and school staff poured out their heartfelt concerns to Dr. Hite and SRC members who responded with a thank you and then voted to close their school. This is all part of the history of mistrust built over the years. Dr. H is a 2003 graduate of the marketplace-driven Broad Superintendents Academy, an uncertified, unaffiliated with any college of education place where public schools are seen as a business and investors welcomed to extract profits as best they can. Instead of planning for each school to have the resources they need, our schools are coerced into competing for dollars to fund their programs. As part of that market-driven Broad Academy policy Dr. Hite is selling district services off to private companies as he is attempting to do with substitute teaching services and our beloved school nurses. What I want to know is at what cost, Dr. Hite. Where are the numbers? We, including the City Controller want to see your numbers on outsourcing substitute services. Where do you get \$34 million to pay this private company when you keep crying we have no money?

APPS has filed a lawsuit charging the SRC with violating the state Sunshine Act. We have been willing to negotiate a settlement but you have chosen to pay legal fees instead of coming to a negotiated agreement. We don't want money, we want the SRC to become more transparent. The district has spent over \$10 million dollars in outside legal counsel. As all this spending continues to unfold it strikes me that instead of spending millions on legal fees part of that could easily have gone to provide an art program for students at Bartram high school since they have had to cut this critically needed program.

In terms of accountability I want to know why there are no active links to the SRC Minutes from Feb. 2015 until June 2015.

Karel Kilimnik 6/30/15