

More and more people in Philadelphia are realizing that the SRC, since its inception fourteen years ago, has wrought destruction upon our public schools. Handing schools over to private operators, devastating neighborhoods by closing their public schools, inflicting more trauma upon students by forcing out their teachers—the list goes on and on.

To add insult to injury, the SRC decides most of this in private meetings behind closed doors. We sit here and watch as they vote on resolutions, with rarely a comment or discussion, as if they had a train to catch.

But those days may be over soon. The members of the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools have filed a complaint in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas against the School Reform Commission for ongoing violations of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. The intent of the Sunshine Act is to make sure that the people can see what their government is doing and to be able to say something about it.

What happened on October 6 was just the most egregious violation. The SRC did everything possible to thwart public engagement. The SRC deliberately shut out the public by scheduling a meeting at 9:30 AM on a workday and by giving notice that no one, other than the SRC and their lawyers, would call sufficient. They did not allow anyone to speak before they passed the resolution to cancel its contract with the PFT. Not one member of the SRC asked a question of the Chair before its unanimous passage of that one resolution. Since the Sunshine Act requires that all deliberations must be made in public, does that mean that they passed that resolution without ever discussing it? A resolution of that magnitude?

The people of this city no longer wish to be a colony of Harrisburg. They want the SRC gone. But until they are, they are going to have to play by the rules. We are going to keep fighting to make sure that happens. We invite everyone here to join us in that fight.