

## SRC Testimony of Lisa Haver

March 19, 2015

### Sunshine Act

A decision came down this week in federal court which ruled in favor of a former district employee who exposed corruption under the previous superintendent. The district chose to spend over one million dollars in legal fees rather than settle the suit. The SRC is currently spending many thousands for the firm of Blank, Rome to drag out the complaint which the Alliance filed in November on the SRC's pattern of violations against the Sunshine Act. We have said from the beginning that we want to settle. Settlement would not mean paying damages; it would mean a commitment from the SRC to obey the Sunshine Act from here on in. The SRC should not be spending unnecessary dollars to expensive legal firms when students do not have what they need. Resolution A-20 asks the SRC to spend millions more on outside legal firms:

"...expenses, originally authorized pursuant to Resolution No. A-34, approved by the School Reform Commission on June 19, 2014, by increasing the amount by an additional \$3,750,000 from the \$4,530,178 approved in Resolution A-34, to an aggregate amount not to exceed \$8,280,178..."

### Vision 3.0

The SRC approved the layoffs of close to 4000 school professionals almost two years ago. Many of those people were brought back, but many were not able to return when called. Because of attrition and other issues, staffing levels at

many schools remain at the “Doomsday Budget” level. *Any plan which does not posit the return to adequate staffing levels as its first priority should be rejected by the SRC.* The SRC cannot tell students and parents that this is the new normal in the School District of Philadelphia. Only a plan which restores full-time nurses and counselors, Assistant Principals, more than one secretary in any school, and an open library with a certified school librarian in every school should be considered for approval by the SRC.

## Resolutions

I am hoping that the new leadership of the SRC will recognize the need to explain to people what it is voting on, what it is spending money on, and to whom the money is going. There are four resolutions under “Education Programs” which need to be explained. The SRC should, without having to be asked by someone in attendance who signs up to speak, explain those resolutions. That should always be part of the procedure in these meetings. We don’t necessarily need to hear about a contract for a curtain in the gym at MLK H S, but we do need to know how the education program is changing and who is controlling that change. Two resolutions show that PSP and the Wm Penn Foundation want to give for an ECE program. Given their history, it is important that the SRC explain what the program is and how these organizations will be involved.

Chairwoman Neff, will you please explain to us what those four resolutions are about and why you believe the members of the SRC should vote to approve them?