



Testimony for the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education  
Vetri Community Partnership  
September 22, 2022

We are testifying in support of GPEC's proposal and encourage Dr. Watlington and the School Board to establish an Office of Extracurricular Partnerships. Such an office would coordinate OST programs across funding streams, report to the superintendent, and helm a stakeholder table where schools, the District, the City, and providers can meet.

Vetri Community Partnership is a Philadelphia based non-profit that has worked closely with the District since 2008. In 2016, we began providing high-quality culinary nutrition OST services with Vetri Cooking Lab - a 10-week, hands-on cooking series that challenges students to work together to cook delicious, nutritious recipes that celebrate vegetables, whole grains, and fruit. Students who complete our programs show improved food agency through cooking confidence and increased knowledge. We are eager to continue working with the District to engage more students and families throughout the city, though in recent years, it has become increasingly challenging to partner directly with District schools.

The proposed Office of Extracurricular Partnerships would help ensure that Vetri Community Partnership services are, and continue to be, available to students and families in the School District of Philadelphia. This Office would significantly improve communication and coordination between VCP, schools, other providers, and the District. Having one point of contact is critical in reducing confusion and ensuring that partners and vendors alike are connected and included in communications, extracurricular goals, funding structures, and beyond. For OST and extracurricular providers, having one office to work with would increase collective impact across extracurricular partners and encourage more coordination between OST providers and schools.

The Office of Extracurricular Partnerships can further improve student life and student outcomes by ensuring the equitable distribution of OST programs across District schools. We know VCP is one of many great organizations working to improve health outcomes for Philadelphia students and families. We know the need for our services vary from site to site. But without a macro-perspective to guide our growth, without an initial introduction to principals, or to motivated school staff, our team will be less efficient in serving this mission.

The Office would support providers in establishing key school contacts, coordinating changes and scheduling, and lead to more robust school communities. Shared knowledge of which providers are serving which sites, and which sites need the most support to improve student outcomes will ensure equitable services. The Office of Extracurricular Partnerships will allow VCP and our peers to work with the District so that students are better supported and better positioned for academic success.



We strongly encourage Dr. Watlington and the School Board to adopt GPEC's proposal to establish an Office of Extracurricular Partnerships. Thank you for your consideration.

Maddy Booth

CEO, Vetri Community Partnership