



Testimony for School District of Philadelphia Board of Education

Wendy-Anne Roberts-Johnson, Executive Director, Need In Deed

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Hello, my name is Wendy-Anne Roberts-Johnson. I serve as Executive Director of Need In Deed, an organization that helps teachers integrate civic engagement in their classrooms. We want students to see that they can both engage in learning and address social issues they care about in their communities. We work with over 100 teachers and about 2500 students in over 50 schools.

Today, I am here as a member of the Greater Philadelphia Extracurricular Collaborative (GPEC) and I want to encourage Dr. Watlington and the School Board to establish an Office of Extracurricular Partnerships, which will allow the District to better meet Guardrail 2 to improve student outcomes. This office would serve as the primary point of contact for all out-of-school time (OST) providers working in Philadelphia schools across funding streams; would report to the superintendent; and would create a common table for District and City officials, principals, and OST providers to coordinate. You'll find a copy of our proposal before you.

I'd also like to introduce two diagrams that explain why the proposed Office of Extracurricular Partnerships is important. The diagrams show how OST providers and other stakeholders (like principals and the City) engage with the District. OST providers engage with the Office of Schools or the Office of Strategic Partnerships depending on their funding type. These District offices, then, liaise with six other District offices that all support OST operations. Yet, neither the Office of Schools nor Strategic Partnerships interface with the city officials, principals, and providers whose input ensures a program takes place.

Such redundancies and exclusions create conditions for miscommunication and inefficiency. Information is passed too many times to too many sources and key stakeholders (like principals) might not have the opportunity to relay important needs and changes that impact OST programming.

An Office of Extracurricular Partnerships that works with OST providers across funding streams, that reports to the superintendent, that creates a common stakeholder table - will make implementing OST programs better coordinated and more efficient.

Thank you.

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