



PUBLIC CITIZENS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Statement by Shanee Garner, Co-Director of Education Policy, PCCY
School District of Philadelphia
Student Reform Commission (SRC)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Shanee Garner and I'm the Co-Director for Education Policy Public Citizens for Children and Youth.

PCCY has worked hard to advocate for increased school funding at the state and local level. We stand with children, parents and families to ensure that our public schools are as strong as they can possibly be. The hard work of students, parents, and advocates has paid off. With the city united, we were able to secure more funding for our schools and we were able to agree and set our collective priorities with the city's children in mind.

Recent news of a \$35m dollar budget gap changes where we are financially but it should not change our priorities. I urge you to keep your word and keep the priorities of small class size, full-day kindergarten, transportation, and accelerated schools. We need to save vital programs and services that are working for our children and their families.

The city must remain united in our efforts to move forward at this time. The news that the district has made academic gains for a ninth straight year is a great step forward.

The District has taken similar steps in the right direction in the area of food service — but that progress is in jeopardy. Losing full-service cafeterias and the farm-to-school program would be a step backwards for twenty-six schools. This program is critical to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our children both physically and academically.

All over the city, Philadelphians have taken steps to share in the financial sacrifice for our children so we can continue to move forward.

At the city level, workers and the Mayor agreed to a pay freeze. At a time when the District is calling for union employees to share in that sacrifice and forfeit pay and step increases, the District should make a showing of good faith and do the same. In these times of unprecedented difficulty, furlough days are not enough. We must break the current stalemate and realize that no one entity can make our district thrive on its own.

And it starts with us.

Shanee Garner
Co-Director of Education Policy
Public Citizens for Children and Youth
Seven Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-563-5848 x36, shaneeg@pccy.org
www.pccy.org