

public citizens for children + youth

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CONTACT: David Kim, davidk@pccy.org
215- 900-9030 (c)
215-563-5848 ext. 23 (o)
davidk@pccy.org

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Statement by Donna Cooper, Executive Director of PCCY, Regarding the State Supreme Court ruling on the Philadelphia SRC:

The State Supreme Court's decision regarding the Philadelphia School Reform Commission morphs the powers of SRC in ways that makes them more consistent with the powers of the 500 other school boards across the state (with the great exception of local taxing power).

Now, like all districts, Philadelphia must permit charter enrollment to rise unpredictably year-over-year making sound fiscal management an impossibility. As a result, preemptive cuts and harmful reductions in the number of teachers and support staff in district-run schools will become inevitable.

Regardless of the nature of a school district's governance structure in Pennsylvania, the court's decision makes clear that without substantial changes in state law any district governing body will be forced to make devastating choices for children. In fact, the real conclusion from this decision is that the ball is back in the legislature's court.

The appropriate next step is for the state legislature to remedy the dangerous consequences of this court decision by passing laws that ensure fiscally sound district budgeting practices enabled by reforms to charter oversight.

Further by making this decision the court has sent a clear signal that it understands it is the legislature's responsibility to ensure the proper operation of our school districts. That responsibility requires the legislature to put the funds in place and adopt a formula that guarantee every student in every school district can receive a quality public education.

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1709 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy
Sixth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-563-5848 Office
215-563-9442 Fax
info@pccy.org Email

@pccyteam
facebook.com/PCCYPage

pccy.org