

THE PHILADELPHIA GREAT SCHOOLS COMPACT

Our Shared Goal

The undersigned believe that all children—when challenged with high expectations—can learn at high levels. We share a responsibility to enable the children of Philadelphia to reach the age of 18 well prepared for postsecondary educational or career achievement. We affirm our collective responsibility to ensure an educational system in Philadelphia that provides high-quality school choices and diverse learning opportunities to all students—regardless of race, income, first language or special needs.

We hereby commit to work together, not against one another, to expand the availability and types of high-quality options and to dramatically reduce the number of chronically underperforming schools in the city of Philadelphia, across all sectors of the K-12 educational system. Specifically, we commit to replace the poorest performing quartile in the system (approximately 50,000 seats) with high quality alternatives by 2016-17, by:

- expanding the enrollment of high performing schools
- transforming, turning around or closing low performing schools
- forming new charter schools, enabled by the issuance of new charters
- helping families to more readily identify and choose high performing schools.

To accomplish this goal, we will transform our systems to eliminate barriers to collaboration. We will share information, best practices, resources, responsibility for success, and responsibility for failure.

Our Commitments to Action

Accountability. All schools, regardless of type of provider, size or model, will be held accountable for student outcomes that align to the ultimate goal of universal preparation for postsecondary education or careers. We will adopt a transparent, outcome-driven, research-based, student-centered accountability and performance framework that defines the components of a high performing school, is readily available to all stakeholders and the public, is communicated in ways that are easily understood by those stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, elected officials and community members), and can be implemented consistently for all schools. The comprehensive framework shall align to and be at least as rigorous as accountability standards established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and shall consist of measures including, but not limited to, student achievement, student academic growth, school safety and climate, and postsecondary success. We will develop the framework collaboratively¹, with input from parents and other stakeholders, and we commit

¹ The undersigned expect the Pennsylvania Department of Education to develop a statewide accountability framework for the purposes of assessing, comparing and improving public school performance and will strive to align development efforts with PDE.

to adopting it no later than May 1, 2012, so that it may be implemented to assess school performance for the 2011-12 academic year. Data for 2011-12 shall be reported to schools and to the public no later than Dec. 1, 2012. Prior to the adoption of the framework, the School Reform Commission will continue to rely on its current accountability metrics.

Choice. We will support innovation and diversity of school choices by creating consistent, transparent processes and enabling access to funding and facilities. Students need options that match their needs, strengths and interests. Our city also will be better able to attract and retain top teaching and leadership talent if educators have employment options that align to their strengths and interests.

Growth of High Quality Schools. We will expand and support quality school choice by providing resources, funding and supports, coordinating planning, and developing clear, transparent application and decision processes, so high-performing schools—including charter, District, parochial and other types of schools—can educate more students at high levels. Implementation must improve school and district leaders' ability to plan for and manage the fiscal and facilities side effects that such growth, facilitated by redirection of resources, is likely to cause.

- In addition to schools already in turnaround through the Renaissance Initiative², the undersigned commit to replacing or transforming at least 5,000 low performing seats annually for each of the next five years, beginning in 2012-13.

Improvement of Chronically Low Performing Schools. Consciously offering or directing school-aged families to chronically poor performing schools is wrong and must cease, regardless of the provider. Chronically low-performing schools of any type shall receive specific, clear feedback and access to technical support, after which shall follow a probationary period. Failure to significantly improve will bring meaningful consequences, including closure.

- The undersigned commit to assisting low performing schools in pursuit of excellence, across all sectors, by providing access to high quality professional development and technical support at the minimal cost possible. The Philadelphia School Partnership will endeavor to provide funding for technical assistance targeted to low performing or developing schools, provided such technical assistance is paired with performance targets so schools' progress can be measured.
- In the event that the School Reform Commission revokes or fails to renew a charter, it will conduct a competitive process to identify an educational provider, or providers, (including the District or existing or new charter schools) to assume some or all of the enrollment of the closed charter. In the competitive process, the quality of educational programs and leadership shall be paramount.

² Includes Renaissance charter schools and Promise Academies.

Serving All Students. Children with all types of special needs, including those requiring special education, English Language learning, free or reduced-price lunch, and other underserved or at-risk populations will have access to quality school choices. The undersigned will collaborate on research and assessment of special-education practices, and in turn share best practices to advance the capacities of all schools to deliver outstanding special education.

Planning. We will coordinate planning for growth of high quality schools and the closure or turnaround of low performing schools, across and amongst the different sectors of the system and with appropriate city planning organizations, in order to promote geographic balance and fiscal sustainability. Our aim is to have a system of schools offering quality options that are within easy reach of all families. Also, investments in an improved future should not jeopardize the sustainability of schools and programs already providing high-quality educational opportunities.

Facilities. We will coordinate planning and policies to ensure that vacant or underutilized building facilities are made available to facilitate growth of high quality schools consistent with the principles of the Compact, while ensuring that facility transactions support the need of the District to right-size its facilities inventory.

Resources and Supports. We will collaboratively strive to appropriately address accounting issues and overcome barriers to ensure that pupil funding is driven by student needs rather than the origins, type or structural characteristics of schools. All of the undersigned pledge to apply their particular expertise to the development and enhancement of a system of supports, including technical assistance and professional development, so that all schools—and especially struggling schools—have access to those supports when and if they need them. And we will aggressively seek opportunities to benefit from economies of scale by jointly purchasing goods and services.

Curriculum. We will coordinate planning, collaborate on training and development, and share best practices as all schools move to adopt curricula aligned to the national “Common Core” standards.

Talent Development. We will treat the recruitment, development and retention of talent as a citywide priority, collaborating on professional development and career-development pathways.

Information Sharing. To assist schools in leveraging data to improve and tailor instruction, and to provide greater transparency for the purpose of constructively engaging parents, businesses and civic leaders in the effort to expand quality school options, we will work collaboratively to remove barriers and share student and school performance data, as well as budget, curriculum and facilities information, in a consistent, ongoing, and timely manner—amongst each other and with the public.

Universal Enrollment: We will pursue a system of “universal enrollment”—i.e., aligning schools’ application procedures, from public announcements to application materials to lottery dates and other timing, as uniformly as possible. Expanding the number of high

performing schools will only truly serve parents and students if they are more readily able to assess, understand and apply for the options available to them.

Joint Advocacy: We will coordinate advocacy at the community, city, state and federal levels to promote policies and legislation that are aligned to the tenets of this Compact.

Partnerships. We will work jointly to build and expand partnerships with business leaders, civic leaders, neighborhoods and community leaders, and public officials in order to enhance alignment of education reform strategies to business and civic strategies for ensuring a diverse and skilled workforce.

Building on Work Already Under Way

Our shared commitments build on efforts already under way to place more students in high performing schools. Beginning in 2009, the District—with input from charter schools and other stakeholders—took a major step toward defining, measuring, and basing decisions on school performance by creating a multi-measure accountability metric. Using this tool, the District identified 88 District and charter schools enrolling nearly 46,000 students as being in the lowest quartile of performance in the city. Starting in 2010-11 and continuing in the current academic year, the District has shifted approximately 20,000 of those seats in 22 schools to new management and/or school models through the Renaissance Initiative. In “Renaissance” schools the District transferred management responsibility to a charter management organization. In “Promise Academies” it assigned new school leadership and won support from the teachers union for flexibility on certain work rules to allow for extended learning time. In the 2010-11 school year, Renaissance charters and Promise Academies registered gains on state proficiency exams well above the District average.

While some charter schools have taken issue with the methodology underpinning the current accountability metric, the undersigned affirm their commitment to developing and using a strong, multi-measure accountability framework for the purpose of measuring progress in achieving the goals of this Compact.

Who We Are

The School District of Philadelphia (the “District”) is a separate and independent home rule school district of the first class established by the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter and responsible for the operation of the public school system in Philadelphia, governed by the School Reform Commission (the “SRC”). The SRC was created in 2002 following a declaration of distress by the Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth. The SRC exercises the powers and duties of the former Board of Education.

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (“PCPCS”) is a nonprofit association representing 47 charter schools in the City³, and supporting the principles of choice, quality and accountability in public education..

³ PCPCS also represents more than 50 charter schools elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

Philadelphia Charters For Excellence (“PCE”) is an association of 22 charter schools operating in the District and committed to providing high quality educational opportunities to public school students in Philadelphia.

The Mayor’s Office on Education (“M/OE”) is an office within the Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia devoted to improving educational options for the residents of Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (“PDE”) is responsible for the oversight of a thorough and efficient system of education across the state and provides the majority of funding for K-12 education in the City of Philadelphia.

Creation of the Compact Committee

No later than 45 days after the signing of this Compact, the undersigned will establish a committee (the “Compact Committee”) to assist in the implementation of the Compact. The Compact Committee will have three members appointed by the District, three, collectively, by PCPCS and PCE, and one by M/OE. PDE will appoint one member, and two non-voting seats shall be made available for representatives of business and philanthropy. The Compact Committee may from time to time appoint additional non-voting members, establish subcommittees or working groups, or seek input from community groups for purposes of executing and addressing key elements of the Compact.

Work Plan: Within 45 days of the formation of the Compact Committee, the Committee shall establish a work plan to guide implementation of the Compact. The work plan shall include specific commitments by the parties to this Compact to completing work that will be necessary for achieving the work plan, along with deadlines for completion.

Accountability Framework: Within 90 days of the formation of the Compact Committee, it shall make recommendations to PDE on inputs and weighting for a statewide school accountability and performance framework.

Authority: While the Compact Committee shall be an advisory body with responsibility to make recommendations to the SRC, charter operators and PDE, the intent and expectation of the signatories is that these entities will strongly consider the Compact Committee’s recommendations.

Establishment of a New Office of Charter Schools

By July 1, 2012, the SRC shall establish a new Office of Charter Schools (“OCS”) whose executive director shall report directly to the SRC. Accordingly, the SRC shall have responsibility for the policies and budgets of both the District and the OCS. Separating the OCS from the District will ensure that charter schools’ needs for service and consultation can be met in a timely fashion by staff whose job is primarily to promote the improvement of charter school performance. At the same time, keeping the District and OCS both reporting into the SRC will provide for consistent and continuous alignment in strategy and budget-

setting. The OCS shall be responsible for recommending the authorization, renewal, amendment and revocation of charters within the City to the SRC, in accordance with the principles of this Compact. It will work closely with the SRC and Superintendent to manage and coordinate communications with and to charter schools, establish clear and consistent processes and evaluation criteria for new and renewal applications, implement and manage those processes, perform due diligence on applications, monitor charter school performance and financial health, ensure charter schools' access to student data systems, and facilitate collaboration between charters and the District relating to talent development, facilities management, data gathering and analysis, and implementing best practices.

Other Matters

Joinder: Charter schools not members of PCPCS or PCE are invited to join this Compact by executing a copy of this document.

Support of the Compact: The District, PCPCS, PCE, and M/OE will work to develop support for the Compact within the Charter community and among the broader group of stakeholders in public education in Philadelphia, including business leaders, labor and the philanthropic community.

The undersigned sign this Compact to pledge their commitment to the goal and undertakings stated herein:

[Signatures]



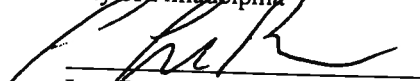
Pedro Ramos, Chair
School Reform Commission



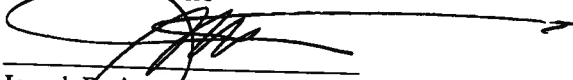
Leroy Nunery, II, Ph.D., Acting CEO & Superintendent
School District of Philadelphia



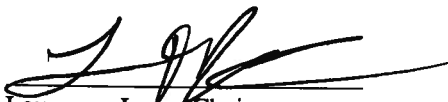
Michael Nutter, Mayor
City of Philadelphia



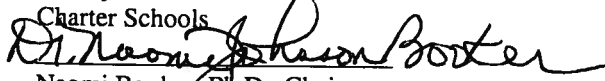
Lars Beck, Chief Executive Officer
Scholar Academies



Joseph Proietta, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer
Community Academy of Philadelphia



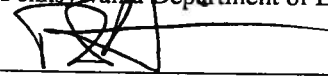
Lawrence Jones, Chair
Pennsylvania Coalition of Public
Charter Schools



Naomi Booker, Ph.D., Chair
Philadelphia Charters for Excellence



Ronald Tomalis, Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Education



David Hardy, Chief Executive Officer
Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter
School