

Educational Nominating Panel Convening Meeting
November 17, 2020, 3 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Sean Vereen, Bonnie Camarda, Peter Gonzales, Ellen Mattleman Kaplan, Derren Mangum, Maura McCarthy, Stephanie Naidoff, Ivy Olesh, Kimberly Pham, Barbara Moore Williams

1. Mr. Pritchett welcomed everyone and explained that the Panel would be reconvening for its third iteration.
2. Mr. Pritchett asked if there were questions on the February 12, 2020 meeting minutes which had previously been circulated. There were none. Mr. Vereen moved for the approval of the minutes from the meeting on February 12, 2020. Rev. Camarda seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. Mr. Vereen moved that the Chair be authorized to take the steps necessary for the Panel to comply with Section 12-207(d) of the Education Supplement to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, which requires the panel to invite business, civic, professional, labor, and other organizations, as well as individuals, situated or resident within the City to submit for consideration by the Panel the names of persons qualified to serve as members of the Board of Education. Mr. Mangum seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Pritchett noted that the Mayor's Office of Education had already posted an application for the Board of Education on its website, and had issued a press release that again highlighted this application. He requested that the Mayor's Office of Education re-post the application with notice that applications will be submitted to the Panel.
4. Mr. Pritchett then invited Otis Hackney, Chief Education Officer to provide remarks on behalf of the Mayor and present an overview of the duties and qualities of a Board of

Education Member. Mr. Hackney welcomed the Panel and thanked them for their service. He then described the work of the Board and the duties they would have.

5. Mr. Pritchett then invited Christina M. Hernandez, Assistant Secretary of the Panel to provide remarks on the responsibilities of the Educational Nominating Panel. Ms. Hernandez described the process by which the Panel would be required to provide names to the Mayor and offered a brief summary on how it has been done in the past.
6. Mr. Pritchett then invited President of the Board of Education, Joyce Wilkerson to provide remarks on behalf of the Board. Board President Wilkerson then presented on the Goals and Guardrails, the Board's five-year strategic plan that the Board planned to adopt at their December 10, 2020 meeting.
7. Mr. Pritchett then explained that public comment for the meeting was received via written testimony. The comments provided prior to the meeting were circulated with the Panel. At the time of the meeting the Panel had received five comments from members of the public. These individuals represent a wide range from retired School District employees, concerned parents, and community organizers. In summary these individuals would like us to ensure that all applicants are invested in the future of Philadelphia's students, families and communities. Given the recent election, two comments noted the strength of board members who understand the long-term importance of a student voter registration and engagement effort to increase voter registration and civic engagement. There was a comment noting the importance of literacy and libraries in schools. A consistent thread across the comments was the strain of the global pandemic and virtual education on parents, families, and children as they try to balance the needs of all members of the household. The comments in full are attached in Appendix A.

8. Mr. Pritchett also explained that the online comment portal would remain open through the application process and that these comments would be circulated and reviewed in concert with the applications.


9. Mr. Pritchett reminded members and the public that the Panel would reconvene publicly to vote to submit its list of potential candidates to the Mayor. He further stated that any and all interested candidates should submit their application as soon as possible.

10. Mr. Pritchett adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Christina Hernandez, Assistant Secretary

Appendix A

First Name	Last Name	Comment
Thomas	Quinn	<p>Dear Panelists,</p> <p>I'm writing to ask that the Nominating Panel consider whether applicants are invested enough in the issues that impact Philadelphia students, schools, and communities to advocate for a student voter registration and engagement policy.</p> <p>Such a policy must ensure that 1) every student in the School District of Philadelphia will learn about the critical importance of voting and other forms of civic participation, 2) every eligible student in the School District of Philadelphia will have the opportunity to register to vote in school, 3) the district uses available data and technology for voter registration and nonpartisan "get-out-the-vote" initiatives, and 4) the policy include a statement of school district support for school staff and students engaging in nonpartisan voter engagement activities.</p> <p>Given that the School District serves approximately 8,000 students who turn 18 each year, and that over 80% are students of color, and over 90% are from economically disadvantaged families; these students, their communities, their schools, and their city have issues, problems, and interests that need to be addressed by public policy. History has shown that people's concerns are much more likely to be heard by politicians if they reliably turn out to vote.</p> <p>I hope that our new board members will understand that enacting a student voter engagement policy will have a critical, positive, and sustainable impact on our schools, communities, city, and our democracy into the future.</p> <p>Thomas Quinn</p>
Marissa	Friedman	<p>Dear Panelists,</p> <p>I'm writing to ask that the Nominating Panel prioritize applicants who are true advocates for Philadelphia students and families and will prioritize a student voter registration and engagement policy.</p> <p>Such a policy must ensure that 1) every student in the School District of Philadelphia will learn about the critical importance of voting and other forms of civic participation, 2) every eligible student in the School District of Philadelphia will have the opportunity to register to vote in school, 3) the district uses available data and technology for voter registration and nonpartisan "get-out-the-vote" initiatives, and 4) the policy include a statement of school district support for school staff and students engaging in nonpartisan voter engagement activities.</p> <p>Given that the School District serves approximately 8,000 students who turn 18 each year, and that over 80% are students of color, and over 90% are from economically disadvantaged families; these students, their communities, their schools, and their city have issues, problems, and interests that need to be addressed by public policy. History has shown that people's concerns are much more likely to be heard by politicians if they reliably turn out to vote.</p> <p>Schools should be a place where students learn how to be active, engaged citizens. Philadelphia schools are currently failing its students in this regard.</p> <p>I hope that our new board members will understand that enacting a student voter engagement policy will have a critical, positive, and sustainable impact on our schools, communities, city, and our democracy into the future.</p>
Adria	Polite	<p>There has to be a better way to help our children get the proper education they need in order to succeed in life. I do understand that the world is dramatically changing and technology/online learning/online shopping is all the new normal but how can these schools and teachers do what they supposed to without the proper technology for themselves. Half the children in public schools only have a laptop. They don't have the luxury of sitting up properly at a desk or table, some don't even have that. The teachers talk and attempt to teach</p>

		<p>kindergarten students as if they been doing online learning for five years now. These children still learning how to get logged into the google classroom. Parents can't even go to work because we have to stay home and be our children's second teacher.</p>
<p>Barbara</p>	<p>Dowdall</p>	<p>Oh, the places you'll go with a school library*</p>  <p>POSTED: MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2015, 1:07 AM</p> <p>By David W. Brown, Jessica Kahn, and Greg Moore</p> <p>On Monday, adults throughout the country will don oversized red-and-white hats to read their favorite Dr. Seuss book to thousands of eager schoolchildren in honor of Read Across America Day. This annual event featuring <i>The Cat in the Hat</i> was created by the National Education Association to celebrate Dr. Seuss and encourage students to read.</p> <p>While reading to children is always an activity worth pursuing, this occasion is also an opportune time to note that too many books remain out of reach to our kids because they attend schools where the libraries have been closed or are barely functioning.</p> <p>The situation is most dire in Philadelphia.</p> <p>According to the School District's own assessment, about 206 out of 218 schools in the district have no librarian, 200 have no functional book collection, 140 do not have updated technology, and 200 do not have appropriate spaces for library. This has all come about as a result of having to choose from a number of bad budget options while trying to educate our children in a time of diminishing resources.</p> <p>We have come into this desperate situation from a variety of paths, but have all arrived at the conclusion that more help is needed than we as a community have been providing. We are a nonprofit exec whose mission is to re-open formerly closed libraries, a retired educator donating books to schools, and a concerned parent trying to engage students to reclaim their underused library space. We believe we have made an impact in a handful of schools but</p>

always learn the same harsh lesson: "It's better than nothing, but not nearly what our kids need."

"Better than nothing" should never be an option for children when it comes to education. And, for at-risk students, we do them a disservice by depriving them of a resource that is considered standard elsewhere.

Student access to a school library and diverse reading materials correlates strongly with improved reading scores. Research has shown that print-rich environments are essential for students' literacy development, and this is all the more true for students from low-income neighborhoods. In fact, studies have confirmed that poor children get a larger percentage of books from the school library than their more affluent peers.

Further, the Pew Research Center has found that 81 percent of parents value school libraries because they offer resources and access to information that they do not have at home. Finally, in the most comprehensive study of school libraries to date, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education found that higher standardized test scores were highly correlated with greater library access, more flexible library scheduling, more collaboration between librarians and teachers, and larger book collections. In other words, children do better when they go to a school that has a library.

But simply having books on the shelf does not a library make.

We need library professionals as partners to really make this work. In 2012, a Pennsylvania research study examined the scores of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading and writing tests, and reported that students perform better in these tests when their schools have libraries with certified librarians. The study also found that school library programs with certified librarians have an even greater impact on students who are black and Hispanic, as well as those who have disabilities or are economically disadvantaged. Everyone does better when there is a librarian in their school, but at-risk kids benefit even more dramatically.

There is some momentum in Philadelphia around reviving in-school libraries as part of an overall child literacy strategy. But frankly, it can't happen fast enough. While we're all proud of the dozen or so schools in which we've been able to put library programs, it is equally frustrating to admit that we're barely running in place as our children are falling further behind. It's time we rewrote a happier ending to this sad fairy tale. Maybe something like this:

One fish, two fish.

Red fish. Blue fish.

From here to there and from there to here. . .

Libraries are open everywhere.

David W. Brown is executive director of the West Philadelphia Alliance for Children, which reopens school libraries. David@wepac.org
Jessica Kahn is a retired professor. jessicakahn7045@gmail.com
Greg Moore is the parent of a recent Philadelphia public school graduate. hgregmoore@gmail.com

		<p>Read more at http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/inquirer/20150302_Oh_the_places_you_ll_go_with_a_school_library.html#CZvaBxikzfdvzUc.99</p> <p>*2020 Update:</p> <p>Research by the Law Center of Philadelphia and David Mosenkis of POWER Interfaith reveals that Black and Brown children benefit most from having a professionally-staffed fully-resourced school library and are most likely to lack this essential resource. This deprivation exacerbates the digital divide (and meant zero opportunity for our youngsters to have had a stack of books to take home when schools shut down in March) that is currently majorly deleterious to our Philadelphia public school children.</p> <p>In our city schools, a school library with CTL (now even fewer than in 2015) is more likely to be provided to schools with larger white populations:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Central (my daughter's alma mater), not Girls' High (my alma mater); Masterman (one god daughter's school), not C.W.Henry (her sister's school); Penn Alexander (my grandson's school), not Henry C. Lea (his neighborhood friend's school).</p> <p>It is your deep responsibility to seek and recommend school board candidates who have demonstrated both their understanding of this keystone for quality schools and their longtime commitment through advocacy and action.</p> <p>Barbara McDowell Dowdall</p>
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