

Testimony for Teacher Quality/Equity Press Conference, Tuesday March 31, 2009

Hello my name is Candace Carter and I attend William L. Sayre High School. I am a senior and I am also a member and organizer of the Philadelphia Student Union. As you know I am here to speak about Teacher Effectiveness and Equity. As a student of a “Hard to Staff” school or Empowerment School I am personally affected. I have seen my own good teachers leave to teach at other district schools or leave teaching altogether. I have seen too many first year teachers come in and out of my school. I have seen teacher vacancies and long-term substitutes.

Issues of teacher quality and teacher equity are one of the main reasons why our schools are now Empowerment Schools. The quality of teachers in a school has a big effect on whether or not students do well on the PSSA’s. Not only that, but if there is a high rate of teacher turnover, and too many first year teachers, students get discouraged, start cutting class, and eventually drop out. What is going on, or not going on in the class can make the difference between whether or not a student is motivated to come to school every day.

I know what works in the classroom and I was a part of creating The Teaching Quality and Equity Platform. I believe that in order to have an effective learning environment you need to distribute experienced teachers equally across the district, give them the tools and resources needed to teach effectively, and create effective professional development for teachers. All of these things will help to better the way students receive their education – we the students deserve no less! The School Reform Commission has to make sure that in the Imagine 2014 plan **every school** is required to make teacher equity a top priority. Especially the lowest performing schools that need qualified and effective teachers the most. I don’t want any more generations of students to have to go through what I did. If the district is truly concerned about equity – then students, parents, community, teachers and district leaders will come together and make this happen. The time is now to make sure that every student has a qualified, experienced and effective teacher.