

The Education First Compact and The Philadelphia Cross City Campaign

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHILADELPHIA (March 31, 2009) – The Education First Compact and the Philadelphia Cross City Campaign for School Reform are launching a citywide campaign, “Effective Teaching for All Children: What It Will Take” and calling on organizations and individuals who believe in the power of education to change lives to join them in their effort. The groups held a press conference on Tuesday, March 31, at 4 p.m. in Caucus Room 401 in City Hall.

The campaign’s platform states that “All children in Philadelphia have the right to have consistently effective teaching in every content area and at every grade level, Pre-K through grade 12. In too many schools, the level of teaching and learning does not meet student needs and does not ensure student graduation and postsecondary success.”

Two imperatives guide the campaign, that every child deserves an effective teacher and that every school needs a stable workforce of effective teachers.

Furthermore, six steps are necessary to translate these basic imperatives into reality.

- Distribute experienced and effective teachers equitably across District schools.
- Create performance standards for teachers and principals that are aligned with student success and implement them consistently District-wide.
- Create an effective professional development strategy that is guided by teacher input and creates a “culture of collaboration” in schools.
- Give school leaders the tools & resources to hire and create teams of effective leaders.
- Create a “deep bench” of applicants for teaching positions.
- Open school with NO teacher vacancies.

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“We believe that this is a crucial moment to demand change”, notes Brian Armstead, Director of Civic Engagement at the Philadelphia Education Fund, which convenes the Education First Compact. “The opportunities to make significant changes, right now, are heightened because of Superintendent Arlene Ackerman’s commitment to eliminating the achievement gap, the District’s current strategic planning process, the renegotiation of the contract between the School District and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and additional funding from federal grants, including the economic stimulus aid. The time has never been better to address the critical issue of effective teaching for all children.”

Junette Marcano, a Philadelphia ACORN leader--another organization endorsing the campaign--adds, “Other cities have made greater progress improving teaching quality and equity and have tackled some of the most difficult issues including earlier hiring of teachers, increasing the applicant pool, and equitably distributing experienced and effective teachers. We can too. In Philadelphia we have two applicants for each position, but in Boston they have twelve. We need to get the best teachers we can.”

For more information on the Effective Teaching for All Children campaign contact Brian Armstead at (215) 665-1400 ext. 3332 or barmstead@philaedfund.org.

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The Education First Compact, convened by the Philadelphia Education Fund, is a diverse group of organizations committed to improving public education in Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Cross City Campaign for School Reform is a standing coalition of local organizing and advocacy groups seeking to improve Philadelphia public schools and increase equity in education.