

I want to begin my remarks by thanking my colleagues for their service on the School Reform Commission. I want particularly thank Mr. Green and Ms. Imenez for their years of service. You, along with Dr. Hite, were here in the darkest days of budget cuts, layoffs and school closings and for the hard -- gut wrenching decisions that needed to be made at that time.

I am glad you were here to restore counselors, add school nurses and to see the academic progress that Dr. Hite has lead in the school district. And I am glad that you are here to see this milestone.

While we have disagreed with my fellow commissioners in the past and will disagree likely in the future I want to extend my thanks to you as an educator who for my entire career has depended on the service of volunteers who lead and who guided the school districts where I worked including the former Board of Education for the School District of Philadelphia.

Moving forward we will need activist leaders on the new board who can stand on the shoulders of leaders of the past as they look to the future. The service of dedicated volunteers who serve on school boards is an essential element of every successful school district and I have been fortunate to have worked for some wonderful school boards in the past and will work to support the new board that will be seated by the Mayor.

School boards with a strong focus on fiscal management, thoughtful policy development, safe and nurturing learning environments and maintaining high expectations for academic performance enable qualified superintendents to thrive and kids to succeed. Good School Boards value teachers, school leaders and engage with the community in meaningful work and discuss critical issues in public with parents, staff member and community members. This is accomplished through

a committee structure that places critical discussions in the public before decisions are made, contracts are signed and decisions that impact students and staff are executed.

[While today we can pause momentarily to look at the accomplishments of the SRC that enable us to commit to this necessary transition to local control SRC detractors can point to recent examples of unannounced contract awards to privatize service that were a surprise to the advocates and a surprise to SRC members as well. We can celebrate success but we should not gloss over failures and missteps that lead to the exodus of good teachers and school leaders or the price that we have paid in legal settlements due to the actions of the previous administration.]

This is a new opportunity for the city. A nine-member board with an active committee structure can better engage with the public and provide the voices best that represent the children and the families.

A nine- member board can better represent the diverse needs and identities of our citizens and the diverse needs of different Philadelphia Communities.

I have every confidence that Mayor Kenney will craft a team that is talented and capable of leading in a collaborative manner. I have every confidence in Dr. Hite's continued good service to this city and I look forward to working help the new board hit the ground running when we go away on June 30.