

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Regina	Valentno	My name is Regina Valentino and I have been a school nurse with the district for 9 years. As both a mother to six wonderful children and a school nurse caring for approximately 500 more, the disproportionate action taken against someone within the nursing profession greatly concerns me. I am a proud graduate of Frankford High School, class of 1990, and a community member for two long and rewarding decades. I have been serving as a registered nurse, dedicating my life to this noble profession, for almost 27 years. Recently, some actions have been taken that strike a chord in my heart. It's painful to observe that a nurse, dutifully performing their role during work hours, who out of concern and dedication for the safety of each child, is met with grossly disproportionate consequences. This situation not only hampers the work of committed professionals, but it also jeopardizes the safety and well-being of our precious children. Studies show that school nursing significantly contributes to the overall well-being and academic success of students (National Association of School Nurses, 2017). Our roles should not be under threat for pursuing the very duty we swore to uphold. So, I am calling on you, the decision makers and parents. Help protect the nurses who are just trying to do their jobs. Allow us to care for our students, without the fear of disproportionate reprisal. Stand with our community, our children, and the nurses who aim to keep them safe.
Anthony	Valentno	Please take a moment to look at this petition that was created to save our school nurse at Bridesburg school. Please take the time to see that the community and parents are behind her. Thank you. <a href="https://chng.it/HRE5KCy8X">https://chng.it/HRE5KCy8X</a>
Katrina	Panas	Good afternoon, I am writing on behalf of the nurse at Bridgeburg school. She got suspended from her job because she wrote on Facebook a student's name from the class that her daughter is in. They are trying. To say that she got the girls' information from looking it up in the system. But no one took in the fact that she knew who the girl was from the neighborhood or that she was in the same grade and class with her daughter. When you work in a neighborhood that you live in it's hard not to know who's kids are who's. I don't feel that Regina should be in trouble at her job for posting on a neighborhood page. This had nothing to do with her job.
Star	Burke	Regina Valentino had been a God sent to our school. I always felt my child was safe as long as a nurse Valentino was on duty. If I ever had a concern about my child she is the one I trust to turn to. She had noticed upon 2 occasions where she noticed my daughter was not feeling well or anxious and she went out of her way to make sure she was OK.
Lindsay	Kubach	Ms. Valentino went above and beyond for my son since he started school. Whenever he needed an asthma treatment or he was sick she made sure he got what he needed and always made him feel taken care of. She made me feel comfortable sending my son to school. I knew he would be taken care of if we needed anything.
Christina	Leszczynski	I am writing on behalf of the school nurse at Bridesburg Elementary, Regina Valentino. Mrs. Valentino has been an asset to our school & our community. She takes pride in her work and the students she serves. I am the mother of 3 & Mrs. Valentino has helped my children on multiple occasions whether it's administering daily medication or helping them when they are sick or injured. She communicates with me immediately whenever an issue arises. Please re-consider your decision to terminate our beloved school nurse as doing so would be detrimental to our school and the students. Thank you for taking the time to read this.
Pam	Krop	Recently I learned that the nurse at our school, Mrs. Valentino, is in jeopardy of losing her job. I feel her termination would be a huge loss to our school and children. I have had children and now grandchildren in this school over the past 35 years and she has been the best nurse to ever happen to Bridesburg Elementary. She has a kind and caring heart as well as an ability to make any illness or injury feel better in a visit. My granddaughter recently lost her dog, in January. When she came home she told me how Mrs. Valentino helped make her feel better with a simple hug and listening to her cry. I had another grandchild who graduated from there last year that Mrs. Valentino helped us get to the bottom of her health anxiety as well as her constant headaches. She has protected the kids from bullies as well as boo-boo's. I have never encountered a kinder, more caring, and pleasant school nurse in all of my years.

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Jessica	Smith	<p>Good afternoon - this is in regards to the hearing for our Bridesburg School school nurse, Regina Valentino, who may potentially be terminated. Nurse Valentino is an integral part of our school community. It is wholly unfair that she has been suspended from work, let alone being considered for termination. She is a well respected staff member and the students all know and love her, as she's also a parent of the school and a citizen of the Bridesburg neighborhood. I feel that these consequences do not match the alleged offense. At no time has Nurse Valentino ever brought harm upon any student at the school, during or outside school hours. The actions of the issue surrounding this unfair suspension, and potential termination, were solely brought on by the offending student and their family, who I believe lied to take the pressure off of the abhorrent nature of the crime their child committed against another student outside school hours. This child's crime was recorded, viewed, and commented on by many citizens of Bridesburg. Nurse Valentino did not identify the student by name, nor by any other identifiable information, as she was accused. It is absurd that this issue has gone this far, as to terminate an excellent school nurse, whose value and kindness toward the students can not be replaced. The school district is already suffering a shortage of nurses, it would be disastrous to the students at Bridesburg Elementary to lose a dedicated, local, beloved school nurse. Nurse Valentino has committed no crime and should not be suspended or terminated from her position as school nurse at Bridesburg Elementary, and to do so would be a miscarriage of justice. Please consider this testimony. Thank you.</p> <p>I am writing as a concerned grandparent on behalf of the school nurse at Bridesburg Elementary. Mrs. Valentino takes pride in her work as a nurse and cares for the students as her own. Terminating Mrs Valentino would be detrimental to our school community especially the students.</p> <p>I am recommending that you vote against principal Don DiPaulo's recommendation for the termination of Regnamarie Valentino. I am a music teacher with 34 years of teaching experience with 4 years in the School District of Philadelphia. My classroom at Bridesburg was across the hallway from Ms. Valentino's office for three years. I currently work at Patterson Elementary School. I actually love teaching music to young children. I have been blessed with a wonderful career. I do know that I may not discuss the incident which transformed into Ms. Valentino's termination. However, I may discuss her and the Bridesburg work environment that she and I navigated as staff members. Ms. Valentino is all things medical. She will not accept medical fallacies created by staff members which will distract from her duties as a medical professional. Trage is everything. She made sure that she was available for true medical needs, routines, and emergencies. I grew up in a medical family. As a child, I witnessed much of what Ms. Valentino dealt with at the Bridesburg School. To be as brief as possible, on my 2nd week of employment as a new hire at Bridesburg, I witnessed individuals clocking each other in and out. I began seeking a transfer to a new school at the end of my first year. Finally, all of the individuals got caught, our principal resigned or was fired. However, many of the individuals remained at Bridesburg. These individuals cultivated a very challenging work environment for anyone. Many parents in the community became aware of the clocking in and out. And, I feel for everyone involved. At this point in my career I have come to the realization that punishing children or staff is nothing but a heartless attempt at control. The only thing that works is reward. The school district's punitive measures will not change anything at our schools. Punishment does nothing. What frustrates me about Ms. Valentino's termination is that Ms. Valentino supports a large family with her income. She is a member of the Bridesburg community. Please do not send a Philadelphia family into poverty. The recommendation of termination is heartless. Please support the families of the Philadelphia community. Peace</p> <p>I recently discovered that the nurse at our bridesburg , school Mrs. Valentino, is in jeopardy of losing her job. I feel her termination would be a huge loss to the school and the many children who need to see the school nurse and trust her .I have a child in this school over the past 3 years and she has been the best nurse to ever happen to Bridesburg Elementary. She is super caring and fixes any boo boos that come in the office.I have never encountered a more pure soul , more caring, and honest school nurse in my few years of having my child attend bridesburg school.</p> <p>A Public servant should NOT lose her job for doing the right thing! If the PPD says "see something, say something" and an adult role model follows that advice she should be honored for doing the right thing. The district should be supporting that NOT sending a mixed message to their students! I find the message this sends to our youth to be completely irresponsible!</p>
Cathy	Roberts	
Craig	Bakalian	
Christine	Smuk	
Linda	Bugieda	

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Alyssa	Krop	I am writing in regards to the nurse at our school, Mrs. Valentino. It is my understanding that her job is on the brink of being lost due to a bully's parent giving false accusations. I feel her termination would be a huge loss to our school and children. I have kids and nieces and nephews that have and currently go to the school. I'm the 9 years, or so, that she has been the school nurse she has been a true asset to the children. And the reasoning for her termination is appalling. She has done more to help with bullies in this school and any other staff member including the principal and assistant principal. She offers the children more than just a bandaids when they come into her office. Mrs. Valentino offers a smile, a hug, and a caring ear as well. She takes our children seriously any time there is an issue big or small. She has amazing communication skills when it comes to our kids. Frankly, she's the only one who seems to genuinely care about these kids. During her time out, my daughter couldn't even get ice for an injury in a timely manner. And I found out from my child she was injured not an adult. Mrs Valentino would have had ice on her injury immediately as well as reaching out to me. She has protected the kids from bullies during lunch and caught one in the hall trying to cause problems with my niece. In closing I must add that I would be extremely disappointed with the board and district if such a wonderful nurse were to be let go.
Jillian	Waldman	Please continue to protect transgender, non binary, and gender-nonconforming students by affirming and upholding Policy 252. My numerous adult transgender friends have significant trauma from needing to hide and deny their true identities, and it's been a breath of fresh air to be able to watch students grow up free to be their true selves from a young age. We can dramatically increase the quality of life for gender minorities by continuing to maintain their essential right to self-determination. My daughter enjoys having a close transgender friend and I'm happy for both little girls that they have each other.
Denise	Maneely	It has been brought to my attention that Bridesburg elementary school does not have their regular nurse Mrs Valentino. That there has been an issue and she has been possibly let go. My grandson goes to Bridesburg, elementary school and he is in the 4th grade. It has come to my attention, that recently there has been no school nurse for our children/grandchildren. Nurse Valentino is very much needed at our school for our children, as she is not only a nurse to them, but someone who shows compassion and cares for our kids. She treats are children as they are her own and that is very comforting to a parent/grandparent to have that in a nurse. Not someone that does not even associate with our children. Ms Valentino has been the school nurse as long as I can remember, and without her there, Bridesburg elementary suffers a huge loss. She is needed. Thank you
Lane	Waldman	I am a trans person who wants to have children in Philadelphia, and I have a niece who is exploring her gender identity. I can't stress enough how important it is that we continue to support trans kids in our schools during this time when they are under attack. Allowing kids to use their chosen name and pronouns and the correct bathroom is basic common decency. Trans students are at risk for bullying and suicide, and we should be doing everything we can to protect them. Please maintain policy 252. Thank you.
Elliott	Miller	I'm writing to express my support for protections for transgender students. I personally have worked with transgender students in this district in my capacity as a nonprofit professional supporting public schools. These students are vulnerable and brave and deserve every protection we can give them. Please do not be influenced by the trump administrations threats and bigotry. Philadelphia should continue to support trans students no matter what! Don't comply with any policies that will harm our vulnerable students.
Hanna	Pylvainen	I am writing to beg the School Board to protect all students, regardless of race, religion, documentation status, or ability. It is unacceptable and unconscionable that the Board is failing to uphold their own Policy 119, and also failing to demonstrate how they will make sure any undocumented students can attend school. I am a parent of a child in the school district and I am appalled. Your job is above all to ensure students are safe--students should not need to be protected from their own Board of Education. Reinstiate Kezian Ridgeway, keep ICE out of schools, and apologize to the NEHS students whose rights you have failed to uphold.
Freda	Anderson	On Immigration: Please understand that every day that the district doesn't have a unified and required plan with know your rights trainings and red cards being pushed out in all schools in a systemic way and for all families, rumors and inconsistency and misinformation and fear festers and creates situations where people are paranoid, distracted from learning, and feel hopeless. This can lead to misinformation, bullying, and even death as we saw with the 11 year old girl in Texas who took her own life because of anti immigrant bullying. You have the power to make things clear and unified. Get it does.

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Anonymous	Anonymous	<p>To whom it may concern, It was recently brought to our attention that a currently active labor relations case, ReginaMarie Valentino, was employed by and working for the school district, and practicing nursing, while her license was actively suspended by the PA SBON. She is currently also facing disciplinary action from the state because of this case. Please see attached license verification from the PA SBON - the suspensions are attached at the bottom. <a href="https://www.pais.pa.gov/#/page/searchresult">https://www.pais.pa.gov/#/page/searchresult</a></p> <p>Hello, my name is Sarah Forchetti, I have 2 students currently attending Bridesburg Elementary School. Both of my kids have been enrolled since kindergarten, my son who is currently in the 3rd grade and my daughter is in the 6th grade. They have always had the same school nurse, Regina Valentino. Recently I had found out that she was suspended which came as a huge surprise. My kids have always talked highly of her, always smiling when passing and saying hello. If anything was ever needed for either child she would always directly reach out in a very timely manner. She is always very informative and has no problem answering questions or pointing me in the right direction medically for both of my kids. I'm very sad to know that she is currently not in the building. I, myself am still not aware of the reason for suspension. I feel the school could have communicated this a lot earlier then they did also. Sorry if I am rambling, I hope this helps Mrs. Valentino in a positive way. Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Philadelphia students need to have safe learning environments. Keep ICE out of schools</p>
Sarah	Forchetti	
Karla	Resendiz	<p>Never let Keziah Ridgeway near students again. After constant commentary from her regarding the war in Gaza, she has not once mentioned the hostages stolen from their homes by Hamas terrorists. She has not once mentioned the 1200 people brutally and sadistically murdered by them. That is, until this week. This week, she finally spoke on the hostages stolen to Gaza. Of course, she never mentioned 9 month old Kir Bibas or his 4 yo brother, Ariel, who were forensically determined to have been strangled by bare hands. She never mentioned their mother, Shiri, who was also stolen, savagely murdered and returned to Israel this week. No. Only days after their bodies were returned to Israel after they were stolen from their cribs by Hamas, Keziah Ridgeway shares a PROPAGANDA PHOTO forced by Hamas of a hostage kissing his captor during a deranged release ceremony produced by Hamas. She posted it at least THREE SEPARATE TIMES with some Hamas-produced promoting the terrorist narrative. It is sick. She is brainwashed and full of hate for Jews. She should never be permitted around children again. She shared it repeatedly on social media. It is deranged these manufactured narratives of barbaric murderers who are known terrorists, recognized as such worldwide.</p>
Beth	Tissenbaum	



First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Akira	Rodriguez	<p>Written Testimony for the School District of Philadelphia Board of Education Meeting Topic: Sanctuary Schools/Newcomer Program Proposal Akira Drake Rodriguez February 23, 2025 My name is Akira Drake Rodriguez, and I live in zip code 19146 (Point Breeze). I am writing in support of the Sanctuary Schools resolution passed by SDP in 2021, and the Newcomer Program Proposal put forth by students, families, and organizations (Juntos and Teacher's Action Group). Specifically, I am writing for SDP to 1) fully implement the Sanctuary Schools resolution; 2) reinstate the Multicultural Assessment Center; 3) fund more (equitably paid) BCAs, and 4) fund three newcomer programs in middle schools. Although our current presidential administration has created an atmosphere of fear and xenophobic terror, the SDP and the City of Philadelphia had long ago affirmed our schools and city as a sanctuary from punitive federal harassment, surveillance, detention, and deportation of our immigrant youth and families. However, the SDP's failure to reinforce and sustain this policy (through direct communication of policies and resources) in the current environment has led to decreasing attendance in schools serving migrant families. Many of the protections JUNTOS helped win—such as a raid response protocol and comprehensive staff training—have not been implemented by the SDP, leaving students at risk. JUNTOS' casework has shown patterns of harm and rights violations due to inconsistent support, such as a principal's threat of deportation against a newcomer student. These incidents reveal a need for immediate action to ensure the safety and dignity of immigrant students. These incidents occur because of the SDP's refusal to uphold its commitment to welcome newcomers. As noted in a recent Philadelphia Inquirer op-ed, "the district is preventing schools from sharing this information [on sanctuary schools], or from inviting local immigrant advocacy organizations into their schools to speak, by requiring permission from an assistant superintendent... These schools have had to cancel their 'Know Your Rights' trainings. When will permission be granted to share basic information about our constitutional rights?" In a time of disinformation and state repression of political expression, it is disappointing to see SDP both fail to communicate their own policies, and actively prevent school-based personnel from doing so with their students and families. Without proper information and training, the SDP places the entire school population at risk of violence and harassment by federal ICE agents conducting raids. Finally, these policies and programs cannot succeed without adequate resources and support. Therefore, the SDP must re-institute the Multicultural Assessment Center (MAC), which was quietly closed in 2024. The MAC served as a central point of entry and welcoming for newcomer families, and without it, school-based personnel and community organizations have noted the growing waitlist of immigrant families who cannot enroll their children into school. Once enrolled, these students will need access to Bilingual Cultural Assistants (BCAs), who serve a critical role to acclimating newcomer students and connecting them (and their families) to supportive resources, increasing their likelihood of success. Like many other paraprofessionals, these staffers are over-subscribed and underpaid. I therefore support proposals to increase the starting salaries of BCAs and remove salary caps. A growing segment of the newcomer student population are in middle school grades; there are currently no newcomer programs or resources available in Philadelphia middle schools. Schools are anchors of communities, serving as vital components of urban infrastructure. Without implementing the four above demands, the SDP and the City of Philadelphia increase the risk and vulnerability for immigrant families, who are nearly 16 percent of the population and SDP enrollment. These families have consistently pushed the district to address their concerns with active engagement and outreach, to no avail. The (in)actions of the SDP have already had detrimental impacts on attendance, educational achievement, and neighborhood stability. It is not too late to reverse course and affirm safe and welcoming schools and neighborhoods for all Philadelphians. Sincerely, Akira Drake Rodriguez Assistant Professor University of Pennsylvania, Weitzman School of Design Member of the Our City Our Schools Advisory Council</p>

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		<p>I am writing to express my concern with SDP's decision to use Facing History in regards to preparing teachers on how to discuss the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and the genocide of the Palestinian people that is taking place at the hands of the Israeli government. As I'm sure you are aware, educators, students, parents, and community members have been asking the Board to acknowledge the fact that Palestine is not being taught in schools, and to repair the harm that this has caused to the numerous Palestinian students and families in the District. Rather than do anything substantial to right this wrong, SDP has chosen to partner with Facing History &amp; Ourselves as a way to do lip service to those of us who have been begging for change, despite the fact that FH&amp;O has explicitly stated that they can not provide proper resources on this "conflict." In fact, the District has found it much easier to remove acclaimed history teacher Keziah Ridgeway from her classroom for the mere mention of Palestine rather than taking the time to think through what teachers and students actually need during this critical time. I would like to bring attention to an article written in Jewish Currents about the blatant racism and anti-Palestinian rhetoric that has been taking place at FH&amp;O, which serves to show just how poor of a decision it was to partner with this organization. The article states that FH&amp;O referred to the attacks on October 7 as "an antisemitic terrorist attack designed to murder Jews." They also hosted a webinar "featuring a Zionist activist who had previously tweeted that "Muslim &amp; Arab violent Jew-hatred" was the root of the problem in Israel/Palestine." And last but not least, FH&amp;O has received over \$15 from a Zionist philanthropist, who also served as chair of the organization. Do you truly believe this is a neutral organization who can provide unbiased resources to teachers and students? As a concerned community member and former SDP teacher, I am frustrated not only in the District's decision to use FH&amp;O, but also in its stubborn position on teachers who try to teach critical thinking from outside the lens of Zionism. Why do you continue to perpetuate this harmful rhetoric? Why do you continue to investigate and punish teachers who try to teach Palestine? Why do you continue to ignore the growing number of voices who are asking, begging, for something to be done? Reinstate Keziah Ridgeway. Acknowledge the genocide against the Palestinian people. Stop capitulating to Zionism. Full article can be found here: <a href="https://jewishcurrents.org/a-progressive-education-nonprofits-silence-on-gaza">https://jewishcurrents.org/a-progressive-education-nonprofits-silence-on-gaza</a> On October 9th, 2023, two days after Hamas led an attack on Israel and Israel began its bombardment of Gaza, the leaders of Facing History &amp; Ourselves—an educational nonprofit known for its model lessons and textbooks on racism, genocide, war, and human rights abuses—sent an email to their staff about the organization's plan to address the "frightening terrorist attacks on Israel citizens." In the message, which made no mention of Gaza or the hundreds of Palestinian civilians Israel had started killing there, CEO Desmond Blackburn and senior vice president and chief program officer Abby Weiss emphasized that teachers were already turning to Facing History for help meeting the moment in US classrooms. "Our team is developing resources for use with students by the end of the day so that educators can have the support they need when they reach their classrooms tomorrow," they wrote in the email—which, along with other internal communications, was obtained by Jewish Currents. The email presaged the types of resources that Facing History would go on to produce in the coming hours and days. The group's first post-October 7th lesson, for instance, was titled "Processing Attacks in Israel and the West Bank of the State of Israel." The Region, they framed the evening of October 7th as "an occasion for constant attacks on civilians and the Israeli military," the latter describing the deaths of over 180 Palestinians as the "result of Israeli 'conflict' as part of a 'war on Hamas.'" Days later, Facing History edited the resources, re-titling it "Antisemitism, Terror and War," the document now characterized October 7th as "an antisemitic terrorist attack designed to murder Jews," while still relegating mention of Gaza to an oblique note about "the loss of innocent Israeli and Palestinian lives." Inside Facing History, a growing number of employees watched this response with alarm. "I was pretty taken aback, just by how blatant the exclusion of Palestinians was in the messaging," said a former administrative staffer, one of four current and former employees interviewed by Jewish Currents (all of whom requested anonymity to protect their careers). The staffer said that they later left Facing History largely due to their opposition to the organization's stance on Gaza, a position many others shared. By December 5th, 2023, as Israel's assault intensified and experts began to label it a genocide, more than 80 Facing History employees—around half of the nonprofit's US-based staff—sent a letter to the organization's leadership team criticizing what they said was a pro-Israel bias in educational materials, and a shirking of responsibility to "address the risk of genocide against Palestinians." The letter, which was obtained by Jewish Currents, asked Facing History to be transparent with staff about who and what had shaped the organization's response to events in Israel and Gaza; it also called on the nonprofit to add context on Israel's occupation to its educational resources, and to apologize for hosting a webinar featuring a Zionist activist who had previously tweeted that "Muslim &amp; Arab violent Jew-hatred" was the root of the problem in Israel/Palestine. In response to the letter, Blackburn sent an email to staff saying that the group would produce more resources on Israel/Palestine and undertake a process to better understand what teachers need when discussing the topic. He added that Facing History would also include disclaimers on webinars noting that the speakers did not necessarily reflect the organization's views, and would invite staff to sessions on "empathetic learning and civil discourse." Facing History leadership also organized a town hall meeting to discuss staff concerns. However, according to an employee who attended it, the session did not end up facilitating real conversation on the issue of Israel/Palestine. Instead, after some staffers sympathetic to Israel said that they felt unsafe in the workplace "Over a year after the staff letter was sent, some of its signatories say that Facing History has failed to correct course, instead doubling down on an approach that has damaged the organization. "If you say, 'we use the lessons of history to challenge racism, bigotry, and hatred wherever it is, except for in Israel/Palestine,' then the whole sentence falls apart," said a former Facing History program specialist who left largely over these concerns. "My feeling is that the non-stance of Facing History on Israel and Palestine could be its downfall. It could undermine all of the work that it has done." At the core of that work is the organization's commitment to drawing connections between different atrocities, including the one that it was founded to help teachers address: the Holocaust. Barry Trachtenberg, a historian of Jewish history and Holocaust studies at Wake Forest University, and a member of Facing History's board of scholars—a group that advises the nonprofit on its educational resources and programs—said that he previously considered Facing History to be at the forefront of progressive education because of the way it put the Holocaust in conversation with other historic wrongs, resisting the exceptionalization of the Nazi genocide that has been used to justify unconditional support for Israel. "A lot of people, including myself, became attracted to Facing History because it hasn't historically seen the Holocaust in this narrow way and actually takes the stance of 'never again' seriously in more 'never again in anyone' " he said. More recently, though, he has pulled</p>

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Marlo	Kulb	<p>Hi, my nami is Mario Kulb i have submitted emails to the board regarding my concerns over the action you are taking against Regina Valentino. I am very upset over what is happening to her and her family, she is a parent/mother who responded to an act that was horrific for any parent to witness a child being beat and kicked while the others were cheering and screaming kick her, she is my child, yes my daughter was being brutally beat and kicked while they were videoing. And you are attacking a mother for responding to this! You all should be ashamed of yourselves for putting Regina and her family through this ordeal. I am hoping you will put yourselves in her position and tell me you wouldn't help this family find out who did this to their child. I also feel like this is now my fault, i feel guilty for the actions that you are taking against Regina, this is not fair to both of us! I hope you make the right decision. I did send the video of my daughter being attacked to the board member, please feel free to review. Thank you Mario Kulb, concerned parent.</p> <p>I am a District parent and teacher. I want to begin as I have for many months and call for the District to reinstate Keziah Ridgeway now, and meet the demands of Philly Educators for Palestine. I want to commend the District for its stance in support of our trans student athletes, and express my hope that they continue this stand. Finally, I want to express my support for the demands of the petition presented at today's meeting calling on the District to reinforce and expand its sanctuary policies to support our immigrant students.</p> <p>The School District's Sanctuary Schools policy is very important, and I first want to applaud the district's stated commitment to upholding it. However, I also want to push this commitment further. A policy is just a piece of paper unless it is actively and intentionally implemented. Thus, I am uplifting the demands by Juntos and teachers in your district and calling on the district to train school staff to respond if an ICE officer arrives at their school, prioritizing schools with large immigrant populations. Training is much more powerful than an email outlining a response. Encountering an ICE officer is high stress and leaves little to no room for error. Training is essential. Additionally I am demanding the active sharing of resources and information to immigrant parents. One district parent I work with told me that the only person who has shared information and resources with her has been me, a community partner, and that she has been met with silence from her school, a school with a large population of immigrant families. This should not be the case. I am calling on the district to provide resources about immigrant rights and actions immigrant parents can be taking, as well as strategies for managing the high levels of stress and fear many families are experiencing. The district should be facilitating this sharing of information, not creating barriers for schools to do so by making principals ask for permission before offering these resources. Overall, sanctuary is more than a reactive response to a threat; it is also a proactive act of welcoming and solidarity. In a time of heightened anti-immigrant rhetoric and actions, it is imperative that the district make it abundantly clear that you are here to support ALL students' access to education. Thus, I am imploring the district to make it clear, with actions and words, that you are here for your immigrant students, and to implement your sanctuary schools policy with utmost fidelity.</p>
Charlie	McGeehan	
Mara	Imms	

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Dana	Espinosa	<p>I am writing as a parent to express my support for the application of Pan American Academy Charter School Pathways High School. I have lived in this community for 25 years, raising my three children who have all attended Pan American Academy Charter School. My youngest is currently a 7th grader. This neighborhood can be a challenging place to live. I looked for a safe place for my kids to learn and grow and I found it at Pan American. At Pan American Academy Charter School, my kids have been able to learn in clean, state of the art facilities. They have had access to the technology needed to learn, never lacking the resources needed to do their work. In addition, they all were able to learn to read and write in Spanish which is the language of their grandparents and core to their identity as Puerto Ricans. My children and all children in this community deserve the best opportunity for success. I believe approving this new high school is an important way to continue the work Pan American has already started with their K-8 school. PAACS Pathways High School will have a focus on career preparation and college readiness. As a parent, I want to ensure that my child is not only prepared for high school graduation but also for success in college and future careers. It is clear that Pathways High School has a vision for offering rigorous coursework and providing opportunities for career exploration. Another important reason I support this application is the school's dedication to serving students from underrepresented backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English language learners. This school's focus on providing equitable opportunities for every student gives me confidence that it will benefit our community's most vulnerable populations. In addition, the location of the high school building will greatly enhance a long neglected place in our community. I often drive through the area where the new school would be located. It hurts my heart to see how poverty and neglect has resulted in ugliness and blight. I can just imagine how a newly renovated facility for Pathways High School would give light and life to the area. The children who live in this area deserve no less than that. In conclusion, this new high school has the potential to significantly enhance education and life in my community. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the positive impact this new school will have on our children's futures.</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Parisa	Khoshnood	<p>My name is Parisa Khoshnood and I am the Education Program Manager at HIAS Pennsylvania. I provide this testimony as a concerned community member, advocate, and supporter of immigrant and multilingual students in our District. Philadelphia is home to a diverse and growing population of migrant families who have come here seeking safety, opportunity, and a better future for their children. However, despite our city's rich diversity, we fail to meet the needs of our newcomer students due to a lack of essential resources and support systems. I urge you to take immediate action to ensure that our schools are truly welcoming places for all students, regardless of their background or language proficiency. There are currently no dedicated newcomer programs available to middle school students in Philadelphia, which leaves a significant gap in our educational support system. Middle school is a critical time for social, emotional, and academic development, and newcomer students often face unique challenges, including language barriers, cultural adjustments, and gaps in formal education. Without tailored programs, these students struggle unnecessarily. I strongly urge the District to establish three new newcomer programs in existing neighborhood schools, with a focus on middle schoolers, so that they receive the targeted support they need to succeed. I would also like to propose the immediate reinstatement of the Multilingual Assessment Center (MAC). In 2024, the District eliminated the Multilingual Assessment Center (MAC) without notice, causing significant disruption for newcomer families and educators alike. Since then, District staff have repeatedly expressed frustration over the loss of this vital resource. Organizations like HIAS PA and other immigrant-serving community-based organizations have documented numerous cases of newcomer families waiting months to enroll in school due to the absence of MAC, which is unacceptable. The MAC was a crucial entry point for multilingual students and their families, ensuring timely school placement, appropriate assessments, and access to essential resources. I urge the Board to reinstate the MAC immediately to prevent further enrollment delays and unnecessary hardship for our newcomer students and families. Finally, I want to highlight the importance of Bilingual Counseling Assistants (BCAs) and urge the Board to provide a level of compensation to BCAs that accurately reflects the essential role they play in all schools. BCAs are the backbone of our efforts to create safe and welcoming schools for newcomer families. They provide critical linguistic and cultural support, facilitate communication between families and schools, and help students navigate the challenges of adjusting to a new educational system. However, BCAs are severely underpaid and overworked. The starting salary for a BCA is just \$26,973, with a salary cap of \$50,463 (PFT Salary Schedule SY 2024-25). This level of compensation does not reflect the essential role they play in our schools. The School District of Philadelphia has a moral and legal obligation to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students. By opening additional newcomer programs, reinstating the Multilingual Assessment Center, and properly compensating Bilingual Counseling Assistants, the District can take meaningful steps toward ensuring that our schools are truly welcoming spaces. I urge you to take action now. Our students and families cannot afford to wait any longer.</p>
Aileen	Halligan Cantello	<p>I am an SDP teacher and parent, and I am writing to Demand that the district protect immigrant students, keep ICE out of our schools, train staff to protect our students, reinstate celebrated educator Keziah Ridgeway, and apologize to the students harmed at NEHS. In these times where federal pressures are causing neighbors and communities to fear and turn against each other, I'm looking for SDP to stand strongly and clearly with a message of community protection and solidarity. Thank you.</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Ava	Foster	<p>Hello, I am writing to bring attention to several issues within my school that negatively impact students' well-being and learning experience. While I understand that rules are put in place to maintain order, many of the current policies feel more restrictive than supportive. From the moment I step into the building, I am met with staff yelling at students to get to class. This creates a stressful and unwelcoming environment, making it difficult to start the day with a positive mindset. Instead of encouragement, we are met with hostility. Lunchtime, which should be a short but much-needed break, is another major concern. We are only given 30 minutes, yet it takes the cafeteria staff nearly 15 minutes to begin serving food. This leaves students with little to no time to actually eat. Additionally, we are placed on restricted movement during lunch, meaning we cannot use the restroom or go anywhere other than the designated lunch area. Recently, the administration also stopped allowing us to eat in the library because some students were skipping class. Instead of addressing those individuals, they have punished the entire student body. The justification for these strict rules is to prevent students from skipping class, yet skipping still happens. The reality is that students who want to skip will find a way, no matter how many restrictions are placed on the rest of us. Rather than making school a place where students feel heard and respected, these policies have created an environment of frustration and control. I hope the administration can find a better way to address these issues—one that balances structure with fairness and acknowledges students as individuals with needs and concerns. Sincerely, Ava Foster</p>
Cynthia	Figueroa	<p>Dear Board of Education Members, On behalf of JEVS Human Services, I am writing to express our commitment to partner with Early College Charter School of Philadelphia (ECPHL) upon charter approval. JEVS's mission and vision is deeply aligned with the goals of the Early College Charter School, and we are excited to work together to create new pathways to independence and economic security for Philadelphia students. Over the past year, JEVS has collaborated with the Philadelphia Middle College Foundation (PMCF) team in the design of ECPHL. We hope to leverage our deep community and employer networks as well as our programming expertise providing career exposure opportunities to high school students to support the future students of ECPHL. While remaining open to many possibilities, staff from both organizations have identified (to date) three certificate options in healthcare that JEVS could offer ECPHL students. These programs align with ECPHL's mission and vision to ensure that all students graduate with a diploma plus college credits up to an associate's degree and/or industry credentials leading to living-wage jobs in high-demand industries. The three JEVS pathways are 1) certified medical assistant (CMA), 2) pharmacy technician, and 3) phlebotomy technician. PMCF has included these pathways in its application narrative and supplemental materials. We're also excited that the team has outlined an instructional scope and sequence that prepares students for any one of these pathways, per their informed choosing. The PMCF team included full costs for these certificate programs in the five-year budget submitted in its charter application. Through our collaborations with us, we have seen that the PMCF team is steadfast in its commitment to offer all ECPHL students postsecondary coursework options in college and workforce development while still in high school. JEVS is in full support of becoming one of ECPHL's first credentialing partners. In addition to the Community College of Philadelphia, Our city needs creative partnerships like these to connect promising young adults with employment that catalyzes their economic mobility and security. We greatly look forward to continuing this work together and appreciate the School Board's strong consideration of this charter application.</p>
Katie	Miller	<p>I work in a large school in the Northeast with a high ESL population. I believe the School District of Philadelphia needs to support families and students through our schools by providing a clear message to school leadership and teachers about upholding the 2021 Sanctuary Schools Resolution. Telling school leadership to not say anything makes them hesitant, if not afraid, to uphold support for immigrant families. This resides within a climate of unnecessary fear-mongering from our political administration. We also need further support by prioritizing trainings and materials around "Know Your Rights" so that school leaders and teachers have guidance on supporting immigrant families. Without guidance, many families are left with silence when faced with deportation threats and other fear-mongering. Please step up for our most vulnerable families.</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Maria	Carambo	<p>Title: Delivering Petition for The Protection of Immigrant Students in Our Schools: _____ My name is Maria Carambo and I am the parent of an SDP kindergarten student. I am the daughter of parents who immigrated to the United States. My father is from Cuba and my mother is from Venezuela, both from countries with economic and political instability. My parents and I are US citizens. As a second-generation immigrant, the precarity and challenges of being an undocumented migrant in the United States are not lost on me. And now as a parent, I remain highly aware of the privilege I hold to be able to drop off my son at school every day and know that I do not have to worry that his citizenship status puts him in harm's way. I am painfully aware that many parents and students across the School District of Philadelphia do not have this assurance. For many families, sending their child to school is increasingly precarious as the threat to undocumented immigrant children worsens. We, Philadelphia's Teacher Action Group (TAG Philly), along with 40 local organizations and elected officials as co-sponsors present the following petition – signed by over 750 Philadelphia educators, guardians, community partners, and community members – urging Philadelphia to implement and uphold strong, clear, and consistent protection for immigrant students in our schools. See petition below and at <a href="https://bit.ly/SanctuarySDP">bit.ly/SanctuarySDP</a> : With care, Maria Carambo (SDP Parent) _____ Petition: Dear Members of the Philadelphia Board of Education and Superintendent Watlington, Philadelphia educators, parents, and community members stand in solidarity with our immigrant students and their families against the threat of ICE arrest, and from federal and state policies that would deny their freedom, rights, feeling of safety, and ability to go to school and receive an education. We ask that the School District of Philadelphia fully implement the 2021 Sanctuary Schools Resolution with all employees and at every school site. We are glad that the district has updated and reaffirmed our Safe and Welcoming Schools policy, but just making a statement is not sufficient: to protect students. District employees take the care of our students very seriously and we need district administration to provide us with unambiguous tools and support to do our jobs. We need: 1) "Know Your Rights" materials and workshops for students and families that are approved by the district and can be freely distributed by staff at every school without obtaining permission from district administrators. The district should partner with community organizations to help provide these resources in multiple languages as well as workshops for staff, students, and families at schools (as soon as possible). 2) Training - Educators at every level, from the front door, to the main office, to the classroom, need to be fully trained on the updated 2025 Administrative Procedures for Safe and Welcoming Schools (by the March 7th professional development day). 3) Clear action plans developed and agreed upon by school site staff and administrators to prepare for ICE interactions at school, and how to support students whose caregivers have been detained or deported (by April 11th-spring break). 4) More supports for immigrant families such as a more robust newcomer program, more bilingual counseling assistants, and the reinstatement of the Multilingual Assessment Center. Please help school employees fully implement the Sanctuary Schools Resolution, and send the message that the School District of Philadelphia is committed to protecting our immigrant students. Local Organizations and Elected Officials Co-Sponsoring: -Teacher Action Group (TAG Philly) -Juntos (join as a Sanctuary Defender here: <a href="https://bit.ly/SancDef">bit.ly/SancDef</a>) -VietLead -SEAMAAAC -The Welcoming Center -HIAS PA -Asian Americans United (AAU) -New World Association of Emigrants from Eastern Europe -Philadelphia Home and School Council -Puentes de Salud -Korean Peace Committee Philadelphia -Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia -Japanese American Citizens League Philadelphia Chapter -Building Anti-Racist White Educators (BARWE) -West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship -German town Mennonite Church -Friends of Penn Treaty School -Girls' High School Parent Teacher Daughters Association -Greenfield School Advisory Council DEIB -Beyond Literacy -Racial Justice Organizing Committee -Philly Educators for Palestine -Educators for Consent Culture -Wild Rice Collective -Just Act -Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools -Garces Foundation -Unitec Voices for Philadelphia -Philadelphia Parents for Palestine -Reclaim Philadelphia -Families for Ceasefire -Camp Soljourner -The Dancelon Project -State Senator Nikil Saval -State Representative Chris Rabb -State Representative Ben Waxman -State Representative Elizabeth Fiedler -State Representative Rick Krajewski - City Councilmember Quetty Lozada - City Councilmember Kendra Brooks Individual Signers Individual Signers (Over 750 Philadelphia educators, guardians, community partners, and community members, so far)</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Barbara	Dowdall	<p>I am hoping that the board and superintendent take special note of two phenomena: the increase in our school district's number of students and the recently reported success, described as turnaround, of West Philadelphia High School. Taken together, we can clearly see that moving away from any plan to shutter schools is antithetical to actual reality as well as to the dream of a beautiful unified school SYSTEM in and across all communities. So adding <a href="https://ndc.org/they-came-for-the-schools/">https://ndc.org/they-came-for-the-schools/</a> to your already recommended reading, Eve L. Ewing's Ghosts in the Schoolyard make clear the direction we should be taking. Thank you.</p>
Sophia	Thompson	<p>My name is Sophia Thompson. I am a senior at Northeast High School. I feel like immigrants are not safe at my school because of how many student voices have been silenced and continue to be silenced. The people of northeast high school are restricted at times due to the administration wants. Last year's events at the Black History Month Assemblies with the students who created the podcast were treated horribly by being censored and silenced. As well as when people in education try to actually stand up for what they believe in and others in their community. As the School Board Committee, your job is to look after the students at all schools in the Philadelphia district and at this time it does not feel like that. As Black History Month has come back around, I am more aware than ever of the restrictions and censorship of Northeast students. As the President of Black Student Association this year I helped plan the Black History Month Assemblies at my school. This year, for these assemblies, the Principal and Assistant Principal requested every student who was presenting a monologue, presentation or video to be reviewed by the principal so that we did not do or say anything that they "did not like". I was in shock when they requested these things because this had never happened years prior. I felt as though I had to "watch what I say" or that anything I say about marginalized communities could be perceived as "wrong". When I submitted my presentation on Celebrating Pan-African Art, the Assistant Principal brought me into their office in regards to the only Afro-Palestinian artist in my presentation. They wanted to know what I was going to say as if I was going to say something they did not like. They were concerned with the title of the painter's art named "The Art of Resistance" claiming that people would be confused as to how it connected with the theme of the assemblies: Pan-Africanism. I soon replied that all the paintings were selected based on the criteria of Pan-Africanism. This means that all the artists are from different parts of the world and have an ethnic background in Africa. Their art is also connected to the ideology of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is a nationalist movement aimed at encouraging and strengthening bonds among all of Africa and its diaspora. It has its origins in the struggles of the African people against enslavement and colonization, which can be traced back to the first resistance on slave ships. Given the integrity of the artist, the title "The Art of Resistance" not only should be kept in the presentation, but it also connects with what Pan-Africanism is. As an artist myself, who has sold my own paintings, I would personally feel offended if someone changed the name of my work. This whole situation was incredibly unnecessary. I was exhausted when planning the Black History Month Assemblies at my school, which should not feel like this because it is supposed to be a celebration of Black culture and heritage. The only person I wished was here with me during this time was the incredible teacher Keziah Ridgeway. She is an incredible support to all students at Northeast, especially the minority students (which consists of most of the school due to its diversity). She made students feel safe in school which is more than I can say that you are doing. She created and encouraged spaces for students to be themselves and feel as though school matters.</p>



First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Maritza	De Savornin Lohman	<p>My name is Maritza De Savornin Lohman and I am the High School and Post-Secondary Lead Instructor at HIAS PA. Part of my position is to enroll new refugee youth in schools. In my years doing this work, no two enrollments look the same, and none of them are easy. Just a few examples include: Enrolling a 19-year-old student from DRC who hadn't been to school in 3 years and was placed in 9th grade, he will age out this year--1 year before getting his diploma. Trying to determine how a student who spoke Romiyya, a spoken language, would do in school without literacy in any other language. Waiting months for IEPs and 504s for two Arabic-speaking siblings with the same genetic condition causing total blindness and who had never learned Braille. Supporting Syrian sisters whose catchment school was full and were sent to a school 55 minutes away requiring a bus transfer. On their third day of school they witnessed a shooting waiting for the bus and were unable to return after the traumatic incident. I can't imagine a family who is unfamiliar with the language, culture, expectations and school system navigating this on their own. The unique challenges of this student population need to be addressed through a trauma-informed, asset-based lens; this requires consultations with experts who are familiar with the district and its various programs. The Multilingual Assessment Center (MAC) at the School District of Philadelphia was originally the place families (and community members like myself) could go for help, but it was disbanded without warning and we have felt the loss. What do the families who are not connected to immigrant serving organizations like HIAS PA, Migrant Education, NSC, and others supposed to do now? I therefore urge the board to reinstate MAC, as immigrant numbers continue to grow and fear and confusion surrounding bureaucracy will only heighten under the new administration. I also urge the board to consider implementing a Newcomer Learning Academy (NLA) program at a third high school location and additional transportation support for NLA eligible students. NLAs are designed for newcomer immigrant families, with an emphasis on students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and/or those who are at risk of aging out before graduation. This is an issue I run into more often than not, and these programs are a dream for many of my clients, but with only two locations throughout the entire district it is not realistic for students who don't already live in or in a nearby catchment because there is no additional transportation support. Families are giving up the chance to enroll in programs designed to offer emotional, cultural, linguistic and academic support as newcomers because enrolling in the school would mean 45 minutes on the bus (without delays) and/or transfers. I have seen firsthand that this discourages families from utilizing it, and this is further evident by the numbers of spots that were still available this fall at the existing NLA programs. Considering this, I urge the district to establish an additional newcomer learning academy in a South Philadelphia high school, where there is a large immigrant population, and to provide additional transportation support so existing SDP students can access them.</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Molly	Schmader	<p>Date: February 25, 2025 To: Board of Education, School District of Philadelphia RE: Early College Charter School of Philadelphia (ECPHL) Dear Board of Education Members, We, the co-authors of the ECPHL new charter application, as well as longtime Philadelphia residents, submit the following written comment for the Board of Education public meeting to be held on February 27, 2025. We understand that the Board vote on ECPHL will take place during this meeting. We believe, like you do, that accurate, complete information and transparency are essential to the charter application process. We asked the CSO to publish the official ECPHL Concluding Document on its website, but ultimately, this request was not approved. Therefore, we'd like to reiterate publicly a few key points from the Concluding Document that address inaccuracies or misunderstandings in the CSO's Evaluation Report (and include information that was already available in the application itself): ECPHL's graduation requirements, including taking a minimum of two college courses through the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) and participating in at least one extracurricular activity per year, are not barriers to student success. The CSO Evaluation Report referred to a different CCP program from the one in ECPHL's application. ECPHL and CCP have an agreement that all students will take two courses in its summer ACE program (Advance College Experience), which is not dependent on their academic performance. ECPHL staff will also support students through these courses. Regarding extracurricular activities, ECPHL outlined at least five specific ways in its application and Concluding Document that students could meet the requirement so it will not be a barrier to graduation. ECPHL's Year 13 programming will be optional for alumni. Students and families who pursue this programming will not be "on the rolls" of the school. It is not a school-wide grade 13 or an extra year to finish high school. Therefore, ECPHL will not receive additional per-pupil payments from any public entity. Salary costs for this portion of the Early College and Career Team from Year 5 onward will be offset by the Philadelphia Middle College Foundation (PWCFF). ECPHL's financial sustainability is assured in multiple ways: First, to date, PWCFF raised \$850,000 to research, design, and prepare the application for ECPHL. The application itself included six financial commitment letters. Three additional partner foundations have made verbal financial commitments but cannot submit written letters until charter approval due to their own bylaws requirements. The Foundation is confident in its ability to raise the funds needed in Year 0 and beyond, and will surpass the \$4,350,000 anticipated in the 5-year operating budget. We also listed flexibility in specific budget areas to make financial adjustments if needed. Finally, we feel compelled to note that the operating budget is designed to break even on per pupil revenue starting in its third year with students. From then on, contributions from the Foundation will offset early college and Year 13 programming costs. Regarding ECPHL's enrollment, the team described robust community engagement, family recruitment, and student retention plans to ensure that ECPHL is fully enrolled with waitlists. A widespread desire by families for seats in charter schools is well-established. Thousands of students are on waitlists for charter school seats across Philadelphia, only 29% of charter applicants received one or more seats in the 2023-24 cycle, and three of the top five charter applicant zip codes are in ECPHL's target 17. We will backfill seats from grade 6 through the end of the first semester of grade 10. The Family Liaisons/Front Desk Administrators will play a key role in ensuring the school has waitlists for each grade to fill any unfilled seats during this period. ECPHL's proposed location in the former Peirce College at 14th and Pine is an asset. 19102 is as central as possible to the 17 target zip codes in which adults earn less than a living wage. The building offers students from neighborhoods across the city the chance to better understand and form friendships with each other, as well as to attend school within a mile of CCP and JEVS Human Services. ECPHL's postsecondary partners. Many Philadelphia students attending not only charter schools, but district special admission schools and programs, commute long distances for their education. Since submitting the ECPHL application in November and participating in the December and January public hearings, we've been working diligently to strengthen the school's already robust programming, community engagement, and financial readiness. We secured and submitted a commitment letter from JEVS Human Services, our anchor industry credentialing partner, that complements CCP's college-based courses. We also held a dozen additional virtual and in-person information sessions with interested families. We attended professional workshops to stay informed about current education legislation at all levels — federal, state, and local. We remain deeply committed to supporting the city's most vulnerable students, including immigrants, students of color, and LGBTQ youth, all currently at risk of losing legal and other protections. Additionally, in the face of uncertain federal funding for education, we've engaged the philanthropic community around the necessity of their ongoing support to level the playing field for students who would be disproportionately impacted by cuts. As mentioned in the Concluding Document, our longstanding relationships with several contributing philanthropists provide a significant protective factor against them renegeing on their commitments to the Foundation. In these precarious times, these relationships also have the potential to provide a protective factor to possible funding gaps from federal policy changes. As you are well aware, the issues impacting Philadelphia public schools are not exclusively federal. There are inequities and opaque funding formulas at the state level, across regular and special education, across district and charter schools, and across the 499 Pennsylvania public school districts overall. We advocate for all PA districts determined to be constitutionally underfunded, including Philadelphia, to be made whole (William Penn School District et al. v. Pennsylvania Department of Education et al.). However, as related to ECPHL's application, PA Charter Law does not provide that financial impact should be a basis upon which an application is evaluated. The consideration by an authorizer of "loss of revenue..." as a factor in the analysis of whether to grant a charter" was determined to be "directly contrary to the intent of the Charter Law" in an undisturbed, 24-year-old opinion by the PA Charter School Appeal Board. Individually and as a team, we will always be part of solutions. We are encouraged by and eager to support systemic initiatives currently underway, including Project RISE, in re-envisioning the local charter authorization and performance frameworks. We view ECPHL as one of many solutions to providing Philadelphia students with the excellent education they deserve. Thank you for your consideration. Keshema Davidson, Co-Director Anna Winter, Co-Director Rebecca Benarroch, School Design LeadMolly Schmader, Project Manager Philadelphia Middle College Foundation</p>

First Name	Last Name	Testimony
Molly	Schmader	<p>Date: February 25, 2025 To: Board of Education, School District of Philadelphia RE: Early College Charter School of Philadelphia (ECPHL) My name is Molly Schmader and I am writing to express my support for Early College Charter School of Philadelphia (ECPHL) as a member of the Philadelphia Middle College Foundation (PMCF) team. I want to highlight the great support we have received from local businesses, organizations, community members and parents to date. Community support has been submitted by: The Community College of Philadelphia JEVS Human Services, Elevate 215 Independence Blue Cross Foundation The Logan Civic Association RCO, Main Line Health, North10, Discovery Polytech Early College High School of Springfield, Massachusetts, The TGR Learning Lab at Cobbs Creek College Together Propel America Community Integrated Services Skyrocket Education Reading Allowed Number of educators and leaders across the city. As part of the application process, we communicated with Center City Residents Association (CCRA), the RCO for the community where our proposed school building is located. Additionally, our team is confident in the ability to recruit students citywide given our engagement with numerous organizations and extracurricular providers that serve students and families across the city. These letters of support include: Anderson Monarchs: a sports-based youth development organization that has served more than 5,000 children and their families over a three-decade history. Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative: a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of Philadelphia's youth through accessible, high-quality sports-based development programs. PYSC works with more than 100 organizations and serves over 100,000 children throughout Philadelphia. Play On Philly: a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality, tuition-free music education to underserved children in Philadelphia. Play On Philly serves over 500 Pre-K through 12th grade students. Zhang Sah: a nonprofit organization in Philadelphia that integrates martial arts with educational and developmental programs, serving thousands of children across 27 schools in Philadelphia. The Board of Education is constrained to review this application within the confines of the legislative intent of the CSL as well as the required components of 1717 and 1719. As such, we want to reiterate that in considering whether an application for a charter school has demonstrated sustainable support, the evidence is considered "in the aggregate and not by individual categories." An applicant "need not demonstrate a threshold level of support among each of the discrete groups, i.e., teachers, parents, students[,] and community members[.]" and less evidence in one group than others is not a reason to deny a charter. Instead, the applicant that provides reasonably sufficient support in the aggregate from all groups has complied with the community support standard. Our Founding Coalition members almost exclusively reside in the City of Philadelphia, we had multiple people speak in support of our application during public comment both tonight and at the December public hearing as well as supporters submitting written public testimony. We submitted petitions, pre-enrollments and letters of support from the community, parthers and philanthropy. ECPHL has more than met the community support threshold. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.</p> <p>As a Jewish teacher in our district, I have been deeply offended to see the censorship of students and teachers carried out in the name of combating antisemitism. Jewish people, like any group, are not a monolith, and while others may try to issue blanket statements about antisemitism, they cannot speak for all Jewish people, and they do not speak for me. I come from a long line of anti-Zionist Jews who have stood in solidarity with Palestinian people. As a Jewish kid, I learned about the importance of questioning authority, standing with marginalized people, and speaking up even when inconvenient. It is not despite my Jewishness but because of it that I stand unequivocally with all students and teachers who are brave enough to speak thoughtfully about Palestine.</p>
Sarah	Pincus	