

**TO:** All Senate Members

**DATE:** June 14, 2007

**FROM:** Senator Michael J. Stack

**SUBJECT:** Establish an Elected School Board in First Class School Districts

I plan on introducing legislation that would amend the Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L. 49), also known as the Public School Code. This legislation would create a referendum giving voters the option to allow an elected school board to control a school district of the first class, and to dissolve the School Reform Commission.

Under current provisions, should the Secretary of Education declare a school district of the First Class as 'financially distressed,' then a School Reform Commission is appointed by the Governor and the Mayor of that city – to oversee the finances and operations of the school district. This practice was established by Act 46 of 1998. In 2002, the School District of Philadelphia was designated as such, and the state replaced the nine-member school board with this Commission – composed of three members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the Mayor of Philadelphia.

I believe this is the time to dissolve the SRC and allow the voters of Philadelphia to elect their own locally-controlled Board. The school district is still struggling to improve test scores and has had a significant deficit – at the expense of all Commonwealth taxpayers. By electing a traditional school board, this would give these residents the same accessibility that every other school district in the Commonwealth enjoys. The local residents are hoping for accountability as well as ability to have input and community involvement.

If you wish to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Jason Gerard in my Harrisburg office at 787-9608 or e-mail him at [jgerard@pasente.com](mailto:jgerard@pasente.com).