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**From:** Alan F. Wohlstetter <afwohlstetter@zarwin.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2016 9:54 AM  
**To:** JJ Murphy  
**Subject:** RE: SRC Retirement Dinner

I am learning not to piss into the wind!

Hope the girls are having a good year.

Thank you so much for starting me off here with the opportunity to work together. It meant a tremendous amount to me, JJ.

Still no cameras here, but I am scheduled to meet with the head of the Fusion Center. I will need to pull from my Hobbs and Wilkes-Barre experience.

Chip and I go to see two spring training games this weekend! Hope springs eternal!! Alan

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**From:** JJ Murphy [mailto:[jjmurphy@hobbsnm.org](mailto:jjmurphy@hobbsnm.org)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2016 11:41 AM  
**To:** Alan F. Wohlstetter  
**Subject:** FW: SRC Retirement Dinner

What a great piece. Great job!

Very Respectfully,

J.J. Murphy, ICMA-CM  
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**From:** School Improvement Partnership [<mailto:info=charterschoolrenewal.com@mail96.suw17.mcsv.net>] **On Behalf Of** School Improvement Partnership  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2016 9:38 AM  
**To:** JJ Murphy  
**Subject:** SRC Retirement Dinner

Alan's latest article: *Imagining the SRC retirement dinner: Goodbye, and thank you*

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## Imagining the SRC retirement dinner: Goodbye, and thank you

March 7th, 2016 | Essayworks  
*Wohlstetter*

*Commentary by Alan F.*

Gov. Wolf, Mayor Kenney, Council President Clarke, Senate President Scarnati, House Speaker Turzai, Philadelphia City Council members, honored guests, and current members of the School Reform Commission:

We are gathered tonight to say goodbye to the School Reform Commission, the governing body of the School District of Philadelphia, that has been home to some of the city's wisest and most caring education, community, and political leaders. Many of you may remember the challenges at the turn of this century that gave rise to the SRC. There was no confidence in the District's ability to manage its budget, and half of the students who started 9th grade never made it to graduation. The SRC was created 15 years ago as the alternative to turning the entire district over to a for-profit management company from New York.

The SRC's birth came with a promise of \$75 million annually from Harrisburg to help the District handle the legacy costs that the rise of charter schools would create. As the District and legislative leaders agreed at the time, students don't leave in classroom-sized groups of 30, and the District needed to be able to afford the coming growth in public education options for Philadelphia students.

The results of the SRC under the leadership of the likes of [Jim Nevels](#), [Pedro Ramos](#), [Sandra Dungee-Glenn](#), and [Bill Green](#) have been extraordinary. Along with the growth in financial accountability and academic performance at District schools came the growth of charter schools in Philadelphia, from five when the SRC was created to 83 now educating over one-third of the city's public school students. And the SRC has done this, despite the promised \$75 million disappearing long ago, and with statutory authority that was [ruled unconstitutional](#) last week.

Authorizing charter schools is a complicated business, one that many states have set up a separate organization to handle. It is difficult enough to run a District with 200,000 students, most of whom are in under-resourced families and many of whom need support services beyond those the District can provide. Despite [insufficient funding from Harrisburg](#), limited legal authority, and this Sisyphean task, SRC members past and present moved our public school students and our city forward so that we might come to the day when their work can be handled by two distinct organizations: a school board to run the District

as the other 499 school districts in Pennsylvania have; and a charter school authority independent of the District, as most states currently have.

Such a change would be the advent of the next chapter in Philadelphia's public schools and would honor the wisdom and compassion that is the true legacy of the SRC and its members. So raise a glass to our retiring SRC members. All good things must come to an end!

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*Alan F. Wohlstetter is a shareholder and head of the public finance and charter school practices at [Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaer Toddy, P.C.](#)*

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