



Philadelphia's School Reform Commission (SRC): Frequently Asked Questions

IMPORTANT: ELC's publications are intended to give you a general idea of the law. However, each situation is different. If, after reading our publications, you have questions about how the law applies to your particular situation, contact us for a referral, or contact an attorney of your choice.

What is the SRC?

The School Reform Commission (SRC) is the governing body of the School District of Philadelphia. It was created by a state law passed in 2001 to replace the Board of Education. It has all the power and duties of the former Board of Education, including monitoring the academic progress and financial affairs of the School District.

The SRC is made up of a **group of five individuals**. Under the state law that created the SRC, the Governor of Pennsylvania appoints four members (including the Chairperson) and the Mayor of Philadelphia appoints one. Without the approval of a majority of the SRC members, no School District of Philadelphia policy decision can be carried out. To see the list of current SRC members, go to: <http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/src/>.

When and where does the SRC meet?

The SRC has **two public meetings every month** from August through June, in the auditorium of the School District of Philadelphia headquarters, 440 North Broad Street in Philadelphia. Normally, SRC meetings take place on the second and third Wednesdays of the month. For a meeting schedule, visit:

<http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/src/meetings/>.

What goes on at an SRC meeting?

At the beginning of SRC meetings, agendas, speaker lists, and other information is provided outside the auditorium. These sheets explain the topics the SRC will review at the meeting. The SRC discusses different topics each month. However, SRC meetings generally deal with issues that impact the entire District. For example, the SRC might discuss information about the school calendar, hiring or appointment of new staff, capital finances, or curriculum and instruction. In addition, if the District plans to begin a major project, policy, or plan, School District staff will frequently present to the SRC and answer their questions.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY also takes place at SRC meetings. Public testimony can relate to any issue that is important to the speaker. It does not have to relate to an issue on the SRC's agenda. Sometimes people testify to acknowledge an accomplishment, to share an idea, or to offer different perspectives. Other times, people testify to complain about problems that individual schools or regional offices have not corrected (like transferring a student who has been bullied constantly or getting a permanent teacher for a class that has had many substitutes). Sometimes the SRC responds to public comments. Other times they do not.

Can a parent testify at an SRC meeting?

Yes, but you must register (sign up) to testify (speak) at an SRC meeting. Registration must take place no later than 4:30 P.M. on the Tuesday before the SRC meeting. To register, call the Office of Communications during regular business hours at 215-400-4040. You can only register in your own name and for yourself.

When you call to register, you must give the Office of Communications your name, address, phone number, and the subject matter of your testimony. If you are speaking on behalf of an organization or group, you must identify that organization or group. Finally, you must bring **15 copies** of your written testimony to be given to the SRC and to be kept for records.

Each speaker has a maximum of **5 minutes** to speak, unless there is more than one person talking about a particular topic. If there is more than one person talking about the same topic, then each person has a maximum of **3 minutes** to speak. The number of people who can speak on the same topic (or on the same side of an issue) at a single meeting is **6**. The SRC may consider comments which are personal or directed against another person to be "out of order" and the speaker may be asked to end her comments.

USEFUL TIP: Make sure to keep your comments to the SRC short, to the point, and polite. Make sure to suggest how you would like the District to solve your problem or address your concern.

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