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Date: Sat, 19 Jul 2008 14:32:17 -0400

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Subject: Dr. Siebens

Dear Sirs/Madams:

I am writing to add my voice and experience to the chorus of individuals who have suggested that the Wilson High School administration find a way to keep Dr. Siebens in the classroom.

As the former Executive Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government, I had the opportunity to serve as the co-founder and Project Director for the Philadelphia SchoolStat performance management program. During its peak two years, the program involved 40 meetings per month attended by all 270 of the district's principals. At the meetings, groups of principals reviewed and discussed their schools' monthly performance based on key indicators and derived strategies for driving improvement (e.g., attendance, violent incidents, test scores and other measurable factors that indicate the ongoing success or challenges faced by each school). For a summary of the program, see <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/index.asp>

I attended many SchoolStat sessions with the principals and developed strong opinions regarding the qualities that a principal needed to run a school successfully. In addition to being good administrators, the effective principals had a passionate devotion to their best teachers because they knew that the most sure way to get results from their students was to have a good teacher in the classroom. They saw it as part of their administrative duties to find ways to keep these teachers happy, a difficult task when you cannot reward them with more money, and they mourned whenever they lost one to retirement or to a job change.

Based on this experience and what I have learned about Dr. Siebens, I would recommend that the school find a way to keep this rare gem of a teacher. These are the ones that you fight to keep and to accommodate because that is the best way to ensure a successful reconstitution of the school.

Thank you for considering this message. I wish you all the best in your difficult and important responsibilities.

Very truly yours,

Christopher Patusky