

Dear Reinstate Dr. Siebens Listserv Subscriber,

1. **Student Letters of Support**. We see some of the letters that are being sent to let our elected officials and DCPS officials know how you feel about Dr. Siebens' removal. **If you have not yet sent me a copy of a support letter that you have sent, please send it to me so we can add it to our collection.**

Attached are two extraordinary letters from former students of Dr. Siebens which came in last week, one from a post-doctoral fellow studying molecular genetics, the other from a medical student, both of whom are where they are solely because of Dr. Siebens. I wanted you to read them because they are so powerful and tell such a wonderful story about what Dr. Siebens does in his classroom and how he inspires his students to learn. In short, what great teachers do.

The post-doctoral fellow, Sydella Blatch, started with Dr. Siebens' basic anatomy class in 10th grade and she says Dr. Siebens is the best teacher she's ever had all the way through her Ph.D. The medical student, Brendan Norwood, was a mediocre student who didn't know what he wanted to do until he took Dr. Siebens' AP Bio class, now he's President of his class at Columbia Medical School.

Dr. Siebens is that rare kind of teacher who inspires. According to the DCPS administration, he "doesn't fit in." This makes no sense at all.

As Sydella Blatch, now Ph.D., wrote, ***"Dr. Siebens is not only effective, but he was fair. One of the things I admired most about him was this quality. Many of the teachers I had at Wilson clearly treated students differently, seemingly based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or current educational achievements. It was apparent to me that Dr. Siebens did not do this. Although I performed very well in his class, he did not at all hesitate to discipline me at the slightest misbehavior. He also did not treat students differently, based on how "fast" they learned or what they already knew in the subject. He really treated us under the belief that all of his students had the same ability to do well."***

Brendan Norwood, soon to be MD, wrote, ***"I had been a mediocre student up until senior year, when I found myself inspired by Dr. Siebens, who pushed me to work harder and set my goals higher. As I enter my fourth year of study as president of my class at a prestigious medical school, preparing to embark on a career in pediatric emergency medicine, I look back and realize how much I owe to that man. Of all the teachers under whom I studied during my 14 years in the DC Public Schools, none inspired me or taught me as much as Art Siebens."***

Wake up, DCPS, and listen to your students.

Given the theme of American students' poor showing on international math and science assessments, and in this time of increasing difficulty in attracting American high school graduates to major in science and pre-med programs and, at the graduate level, to pursue advanced studies in our top medical schools and scientific research institutions, it would be scandalous for many to discover that the No Child Left Behind Act -- the leading federal program aimed at improving American schools -- is being misused to drive away successful science teachers.

2. **How You Can Help.**

Current Initiatives

1. Letters of Support. If you haven't written one yet yourself, please do. Here's how:

<http://reinstatedrart.com/help.html>. Also, please reach out to make sure that all current and former Wilson students and their parents are aware of what's happening and know about the student's petition:

<http://gopetition.com/petitions/reinstate-dr-art-siebens.html>. Feel free to send this email everywhere you think it may have an impact.

2. Outreach. Tell the story of Dr. Siebens' removal to your friends, neighbors and colleagues, and to others with whom you have ties or connections in the sciences, medicine, education, business, government, neighborhood listservs, etc. Ask them to share the story with their colleagues, students or professionals. We hear so much about poor math and science performance, we want to be sure that the No Child Left Behind Act isn't being used to punish successful math and science teachers

Future Initiatives

We remain hopeful that arrangements can be made to reinstate Dr. Siebens before classes start in 29 days. To that end, we have chosen to keep our message focused among the Wilson community for the time being. However, in the event that progress is not being made toward reinstatement for the first day of school, we will over the coming weeks ask for your help with specific initiatives. Please do not respond now, but so that you can think about how you can help if we need to raise the visibility of our campaign, here are several initiatives currently in the planning stages, and hopefully never needed:

1. Capital Hill Initiative. We may ask you for your contacts to Members of Congress (and their staff) who are themselves physicians or who sit on committees with oversight over federal education entitlements and over No Child Left Behind in particular, and who would be interested in understanding how the No Child Left Behind Act is being misused to drive away successful science teachers.

2. Legal Defense Initiative. While Dr. Siebens has already retained lead counsel and is consulting with legal experts in specific areas (some of whom are parents of his former students), if you are a lawyer, we may ask you to help the legal defense team if you specialize in labor law, education law/the No Child Left Behind Act, the DC Whistleblower Protection Act, constitutional law, are a litigator, or otherwise feel you can contribute to the team. We may also ask for contributions to Dr. Siebens' Legal Defense Fund in the weeks ahead. We have already received generous contributions which are funding the current effort. A number of lawyer-parents are already involved in this initiative.

3. Communications Initiative. Once our policy of respecting Dr. Siebens' request that we not cooperate with media inquiries changes, we may ask for your contacts to reporters, television and radio news programs, etc. who can help publicize Dr. Siebens' plight. If you are a communications professional, we may ask you to help plan and implement our media campaign. A number of parents have already offered their assistance for this initiative.

Best,

Paul

Paul Mahon

Wilson Parent of Maddie ('07) and Hanna ('09)

Maddie had Anatomy & Physiology with Dr. Siebens

Hanna had AP Biology with Dr. Siebens

Please visit our website <http://www.reinstatedrart.com> to learn more about our cause and to access resources in support of the students' petition.