

# Women's Law Project

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Paul Vallas  
Chief Executive Officer  
School District of Philadelphia  
440 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

James E. Nevels  
School Reform Commission  
School District of Philadelphia  
440 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Mr. Vallas and Mr. Nevels:

We have learned that the School District of Philadelphia is supporting and expanding single-sex education. We understand that two neighborhood schools, FitzSimons and Rhodes, managed by the for-profit Victory Schools, have been converted to single-sex schools. We have serious questions about this undertaking and are deeply concerned that these programs, however well-intentioned, could have dangerous repercussions for both boys and girls in Philadelphia Schools.

The Women's Law Project is dedicated to improving the legal and economic status of girls and women through litigation, public policy development, public education, and individual counseling, and achieving gender equity in education is a primary focus of our work. The ACLU of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to defending and protecting individual rights and personal freedoms through advocacy, education and litigation. As co-counsel for the plaintiffs in *Newberg v. School Dist. of Phila.*, 26 Pa. D. & C. 3d 682 (Ct. C.P., Phila. Co.), *aff'd* 478 A. 2d 1352 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1984), in which the court enjoined the exclusion of girls from Philadelphia's Central High School as unconstitutional, we are familiar with the inequities that may result from single-sex education and strongly believe in the need to maintain stringent protections against discrimination in education consistent with the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions and statutory law.

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We ask for an opportunity to meet with you. We are anxious to learn from the School District exactly what process was followed and what reasons were given for the pursuit and approval of this experiment, as well as obtain information about how single-sex schooling is being implemented. To the extent that this information is in writing, we request that you provide us with copies of any and all such documentation. We are also interested in sharing our concerns with you.

We would appreciate a response from you within two weeks.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Carol E. Tracy  
Executive Director  
Women's Law Project

Mary Catherine Roper  
Staff Attorney  
PA ACLU

Terry L. Fromson  
Managing Attorney  
Women's Law Project