



Action. Access. Progress.

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Prepared Testimony of Lee Awbrey, Staff Attorney
Presented to the School Reform Commission

The District's revised resolution, now known as IU-1, is an improvement that deserves recognition. We appreciate the SRC's and Dr. Hite's willingness to delay the vote, as well as the District's efforts to incorporate stakeholder input under pressurized time constraints. We are also grateful that concerned Councilmembers took the time to meet with both advocates and the District to better understand and weigh-in on this resolution on behalf of Philadelphia's children with disabilities and the communities that support and surround them.

The result of that increased participation is a resolution that more clearly reflects an intention to serve students formerly at Wordsworth in existing, functioning District schools and a commitment by District officials to closely monitor the program, including Catapult's practices with regard to discipline and also with regard to transitioning students into the least restrictive environments that meet their individualized needs taking into account their capabilities. That commitment is necessary and valuable. It presents opportunities for the District to develop its practices for increased supported inclusion. It also places a responsibility on us all to hold the District and Catapult accountable for delivery of their promises throughout the duration of the contract, including the promise to be a "dynamic best-practices training facility."

We support the District and the SRC in the decision to not renew the contract with Wordsworth, a school with a devastating track record. But we want to avoid Wordsworth 2.0 – which can happen in programs that are segregated schools-within-schools and where there is always pressure to assign students who are not easily served elsewhere to such programs instead of developing appropriate, supported inclusive placements. It is thus imperative that the SRC closely monitor the District's placements in Catapult and that such monitoring aim high – going beyond verifying "tolerable" practices and performances to ensure it advances inclusive practices. This issue will be especially difficult at a location like Miller E.S., which does not house general education

programming and is thus limited in its capacity to provide opportunities for increased inclusion.

Lastly, we hope the SRC and District will revisit this subject of how to advance real inclusion, because it is not just limited to students returning from Wordsworth and deserves your further attention.