

Greetings! It is my honor to introduce myself to you as the Safe School Advocate for the School District of Philadelphia. As the Safe Schools Advocate, my number one priority is to do what needs to be done to ensure that victims of school violence get the help that they need and are as informed as possible.

Please know that as a parent/guardian you have certain rights. For example, you have the right to request a transfer **if your child is:**

**A Victim of a violent offense:** A student who is a victim of a violent crime and who reports that crime to law enforcement shall be offered the opportunity to transfer to a safe public school, including charter school. The student victim (parent or guardian) may apply to the school district to transfer to another school within thirty (30) days after the incident is reported to school authorities.

**Or if your child attends**

**A Persistently Dangerous School (PDS):** The Pennsylvania Department of Education maintains an official PDS list. If your child attends a persistently dangerous school, you have the right to apply for a transfer of your child to a safe public school, including charter school. The transfer must occur within thirty (30) days of the school receiving the application.

Also, please know that the Safe Schools Advocate is available and can:

- 1) Attend the disciplinary hearings when requested by the parent/guardian, as well as present information and testimony and cross examine witnesses;
- 2) Provide assistance and advice on available victim support services;
- 3) Provide information about the disciplinary process and its outcome;
- 4) Provide information about whether the school district acted properly in cases involving weapons;
- 5) Assist in ensuring that the victim will be safe on school property;
- 6) Make reports to the police where the district fails to do so;
- 7) Provide information and recommendations to the District Attorney regarding the impact of the incident on the victim and the victim's family.

I encourage all persons who have a question or concern and are invested in the safety of our children in the school district of Philadelphia to contact my office at 215-656-5381 between the hours of 8:30-5:00pm. To report an incident, please call the hotline at 1-877-730-6315.

I look forward to promoting the wonderful potential that exists for all children when they are given a safe learning environment.

--- **Kelley B. Hodge, Esq.**