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A defeatist plan to restructure Philadelphia public schools

By [Valerie Strauss](#)

Philadelphia school “recovery” officials have announced a radical restructuring plan that calls for:

- * closing 40 low-performing, underutilized schools in 2013 and a total of 64 more by 2017
- * organizing “achievement networks” of about 25 schools that would be run by outsiders who bid for management contracts
- * increasing the number of charter schools, which now educate about 25 percent of the city’s roughly 200,000 students
- * effectively shutting down the central office, which is already half the size it was last year
- * phasing out all academic divisions now in place by this summer, with pilot achievement networks in place as early as this fall.

This plan, [spelled out](#) in the Philadelphia Inquirer, sounds like an especially desperate Hail Mary pass with no more chance of succeeding than previous efforts to improve the city’s ailing public school system.

If you have any doubt this plan is meant to blow up the district of 249 schools, consider that the man who recently announced the proposal, Chief Recovery Officer Thomas Knudsen, didn’t refer to the Philadelphia School District as the Philadelphia School District.

“We are now looking at a much broader definition of education in the city that includes not only district schools but other schools as well,” he was [quoted as saying by the Inquirer](#).

After successive waves of reform attempts in Philadelphia — each of them, by the way, hailed as the answer by city leaders at the time they were being implemented — the school system finds itself in deep financial and other trouble.

Continue reading at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/a-defeatist-plan-to-restructure-philadelphia-public-schools/2012/04/28/gIQAjRSanT_blog.html