

# The Five-Year Legacy of Paul Vallas in Philadelphia

## 2002

**July 10:** The Philadelphia School Reform Commission unanimously approves Vallas as the district's chief executive officer and gives him a five-year contract.

**Aug. 22:** Vallas introduces a five-year fiscal plan that includes expanding academic programs and launching a capital campaign to build schools.

## 2004

**May 26:** By trimming costs and increasing reimbursements, the district erases a projected \$13.6 million deficit, and the SRC adopts the district's first balanced budget in seven years.



DAVID SWANSON / Inquirer Staff Photographer

**Vallas meeting with a teacher at Southwark Elementary in 2002.**

**July 22:** Before a crowd of cheering parents, students, teachers and administrators, Vallas and James Nevels, SRC chairman, announce the second year of improved student scores on state tests.

**Oct. 14:** The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers approves a four-year contract that reins in health-care costs, sets goals for smaller classes, and gives the district more authority over teacher assignments.

**Nov. 24:** Vallas and Mayor Street spar over Vallas' request to station armed police in the schools.

## 2005

**Aug. 4:** Amid persistent rumors that Vallas would leave to run for Illinois governor in 2006, an Illinois court rejects his petition to establish residency in that state.

## 2006

**Feb. 13:** Vallas and new City Controller Alan Butkovitz clash over the long-standing practice of having some controller's office employees on the district payroll.

**June 7:** Vallas orders a top aide to repay the district \$19,286 for "inappropriate" expenses after The

Inquirer raises questions about rental cars, room service and airline fees she charged to the district as she commuted from Chicago to a part-time district job.

**June 14:** The SRC asks the district's inspector general to investigate after The Inquirer reports that two of Vallas' administrators took a trip to South Africa subsidized by a software company that later won a no-bid contract.

**June 28:** Vallas reveals he has asked the SRC to extend his contract beyond its July 2007 expiration. He says he needs to know whether to move his family back to Chicago.

**Aug. 23:** After weeks of behind-the-scenes wrangling and vocal public and political support for extending Vallas' contract, the SRC votes, 3-2, to give Vallas a contract through July 2009.

**Oct. 10:** After four years of balanced budgets, Vallas says the district faces an unexpected \$21 million deficit in its \$2.04 billion budget and moves to cut costs.

**Oct. 25:** District officials announce that the deficit is worse: \$73.3 million.

**Nov. 15:** The SRC adopts new fiscal controls, including an accountability unit to monitor district finances.

## 2007

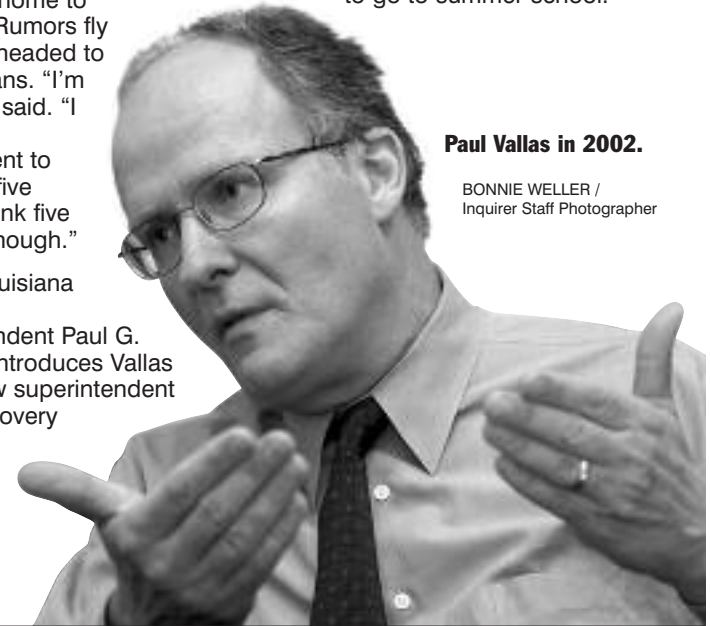
**March 14:** The SRC approves more controls that further limit Vallas' ability to spend money without advance written approval.

**April 11:** Vallas announces he is leaving Philadelphia and will take his family home to Chicago. Rumors fly that he is headed to New Orleans. "I'm done," he said. "I made a commitment to stay here five years. I think five years is enough."

**May 4:** Louisiana Education Superintendent Paul G. Pastorek introduces Vallas as the new superintendent of the Recovery School District in New Orleans, effective July 1.

**May 31:** The SRC adopts a \$2.18 billion budget that depends on \$63 million in new money from the city and state and nearly \$100 million in cuts, including layoffs.

**Friday:** Vallas spends his last working day as chief executive of the Philadelphia School District. One of his last acts: rescinding changed grades for Fels High School students and requiring them to go to summer school.



Paul Vallas in 2002.

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