



November 2, 2021

Via electronic transmission

Dear Dr. Hite,

As members of the Fund our Facilities Coalition, we remain deeply committed to the fight for healthy and safe school facilities. Our Coalition came together in 2019 to identify real, workable solutions to the District's ongoing facilities crisis. We have relentlessly advocated for funding from every level of government, and we will continue to do so. **Our advocacy has yielded millions of dollars in increased funding for facilities remediation, and we have much work ahead in securing the urgently needed funding to address the ongoing crisis of lead, asbestos, mold, and other environmental hazards.**

Part of the work we continue to do as a coalition is to also identify process-based issues that need to be addressed. We work closely with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the founders of the Coalition, and we have found that the information that we receive from the PFT regarding facilities to be honest, detailed, and logical. **Unfortunately, with the District's refusal to engage in a good-faith partnership with the PFT in order to address the facilities crisis, far too much effort has been put into just securing the basic information about the infrastructure needs of our schools.**

We are particularly discouraged by the District's ongoing refusal to partner with PFTHW's Director of Environmental Science Jerry Roseman in coordinating school visits and evaluations along with providing the appropriate data. Further, we are discouraged that the **District continues to refuse to implement protocols that have been in place for years** (some of which were jointly developed by the District and Union). We also understand that the Union has put forth additional proposals around issues such as asbestos best practices, and the District has declined to adopt these protocols.

The PFT has provided a series of recommendations regarding overall practices, and has also provided a series of recommendations and in depth reports with regards to specific schools. The fact that these recommendations have not only gone unheeded, but in fact have often gone ignored, is simply

unacceptable. We found the October 20th response you provided to the PFT's October 15th letter to be wholly inadequate. The issues they raised were not addressed substantively, and in fact some of the responses were either false or misleading.

- For example, while you note that the District conforms to "standards beyond regulatory and contractual specifications," this is at the very least misleading — the District is not even following its own internal standards, nor do they follow the practices that have been in place for decades.
- Additionally, it is disingenuous to claim that the District makes a substantive attempt to coordinate any environmental assessment scheduling with the Union when in fact the District does not even notify the Union any longer about when they are planning to visit a school or where they are going. The attempt to blame the lack of shared information on a scheduling issue is offensive.
- In addition, we are compelled to respond to your comments about Jerry Roseman's qualifications to do this work. Just for context and comparative purpose, neither the OEMS Director, Stephen Link, nor the OEMS Environmental Compliance Manager, Kevin Meldrum, nor the OEMS Environmental Compliance Manager, Gaeton Tavella, is listed on the City of Philadelphia Air Management Services, Asbestos Control Division's 2021-2022 list of Certified Asbestos Project Inspectors or the 2021-2022 list of Certified Asbestos Project Investigators. Additionally, none of the 3 OEMS managers appear on the State of PA list of certified "Asbestos Project Designers."
- There are other factual inaccuracies, too. For example, the problem referenced at Ben Franklin Elementary was reported at 5:30 PM on a Friday, October 8 and was accepted by the Union on Monday morning. From that point on, 9:57 AM on October 11, the District had access.

In addition, the PFT raised specific examples of extremely hazardous conditions in schools as exemplary of a District-wide crisis. **The responses to these specific scenarios provided little substance as to how the urgent hazards will be addressed.**

In a subsequent visit to Richard Wright following the issues raised in the letter, the PFT provided the District with a detailed feedback report regarding urgent action items, including rooms that should be immediately unoccupied. To our knowledge, no response has been received, and the rooms remain occupied.

We are thrilled that Furness appears to be on the brink of some progress towards remediation. But we have been raising concerns about Furness for years. And we are still left with students learning, and staff working, in absolutely unconscionable conditions. **We need specifics about the remediation plan for the school, and we need an accelerated timeline and action plan that is clear and publicly available.**

The issues at the U School, too, have been reported for years. It is absolutely unacceptable that the District stated in the media that the District was unaware of any issues at the school until a partial ceiling collapse. **This is untrue and disturbing.**

We share the PFT's unanswered questions regarding Baldi Middle School, Frankford High School, Masterman, Heston, and many other buildings.

We reiterate the PFT's demands in their October letter:

- Immediate access to buildings for Jerry Roseman and members of his team
- Addressing the chronic lapses in responses and remediation plans on the Healthy Schools Tracker App
- Utilizing, with fidelity, the policies and procedures outlined in the attached documents: asbestos best practices, jointly developed asbestos assessment procedures, mold remediation procedures, paint and plaster protocols, and Healthy Schools Tracker App protocols
- Implementing the recommended course of action outlined above for specific schools and situations, while noting that these situations exemplify district-wide concerns, and similar courses of action must take place anywhere problems are identified.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing lack of transparency and accountability related to the facilities crisis. If it were not for the work of the PFT, many of these issues would remain hidden from the general public.

Our coalition will continue to advocate for the urgently needed funding to provide our students and staff with the schools they so richly need and deserve. We will also continue to draw attention to the extraordinary process-based problems we observe, and we call on you to implement the protocols provided by the PFT. Our Coalition is committed to this work, and we are committed to doing all we can to advocate for the healthy and safe schools our children and staff deserve.

We would be happy to meet with you to further discuss.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members and Supporters of the Fund Our Facilities Coalition

Damon Allen

Damon Allen, SEIU Local 668

Rick Bloomingdale

Rick Bloomingdale, President, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO



Donna Bullock, State Representative, HD195



Kendra Brooks, Councilmember at Large



Morgan Cephas, State Representative, HD192

Thelma Clements

Thelma Clements, APRI Philadelphia Chapter



Patrick J. Eiding, President, Philadelphia Council
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Elizabeth Fiedler, State Representative, HD184



Nicole Fuller, Executive Director, PhilaPOSH



Jamie Gauthier, Councilmember, 3rd District



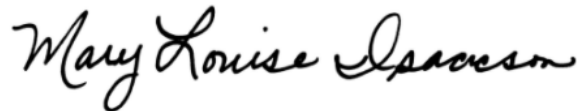
Katherine Gilmore Richardson, Councilmember at
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Derek S. Green, Councilmember at Large



Helen Gym, Councilmember at Large



Mary Isaacson, State Representative, HD175

Arthur Haywood

Arthur Haywood, State Senator, SD4



Joseph C. Hohenstein, State Representative, HD177



Rick Krajewski, State Representative, HD188



Vincent Hughes, State Senator, SD7

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Larry Krasner, District Attorney, Philadelphia



Jerry T. Jordan, President, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers



Leanne Krueger, State Representative, HD161

John Kane

John Kane, State Senator, SD9

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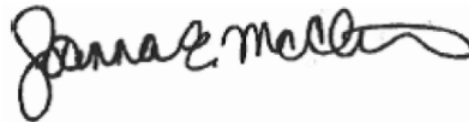
Tim Kearney, State Senator, SD26



Ashley McBride, Executive Director, For Our Future PA Action Fund



Malcolm Kenyatta, State Representative, HD181



Leader Joanna McClinton, State Representative, HD191, Minority Leader



Stephen Kinsey, State Representative, HD201



Jennifer O'Mara, State Representative, HD165



Cherelle Parker, Council Member, 9th District, Majority Leader

Darisha Parker

Darisha Parker, State Representative, HD198



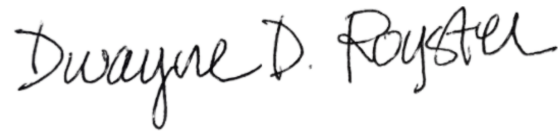
Rebecca Rhynhart, City Controller, Philadelphia

Chris Rabb

Chris Rabb, State Representative, HD200

Eric Rosso

Eric Rosso, Executive Director, PA Spotlight



Bishop Dwayne Royster, Executive Director, POWER



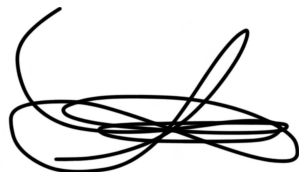
Nikil Saval, State Senator, SD1



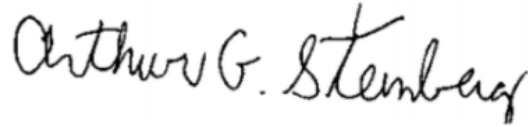
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Frank Snyder, Secretary-Treasurer, Pennsylvania
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Sharif Street

Sharif Street, State Senator, SD3



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Tom Tosti

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Randi Weingarten

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