



2022 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The PFT calls on legislators at all levels of government to commit to and prioritize an investment agenda that is laser-focused on ensuring that the urgent needs of our young people are met. Amidst a global pandemic the likes of which none of us have ever seen, these investments and priorities are more critical than ever.

Legislative priorities should be geared towards tangible investments in our young people:

- Addressing the school facilities crisis
- Increasing support personnel in schools
- Reduction of class size
- Improving access to services for students with special needs
- Improving access to services for English Language Learners
- Increasing number of school counselors
- Increased funding for and access to the arts
- Increasing access to social services in schools
- Increasing number of school nurses [PFT's [recent report](#) on nursing shortages]
- Increasing number of support staff
- Increasing recruitment and retention efforts of African American teachers and educators of color
- Expanding the community school model
- Increasing funding for and access to CTE programs

Priorities are identified by the applicable area of government:



City



State



Federal

SUPPORT: FACILITIES INVESTMENTS and OVERSIGHT

We need a robust effort and commitment from city, state, and federal elected officials to increase school infrastructure and facilities investments. All legislative bodies must work together to formulate a strategic plan to ensure facilities funding for our schools.

Further, at all levels of government, and within the School District, stringent oversight mechanisms must be developed and in partnership with unions and the community.



Passage of Bill #210685

Amending Subcode "A" (The Philadelphia Administrative Code) of Title 4 (The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code) of The Philadelphia Code, by amending Section A-703, entitled "Special Certificate of Inspection," to enhance building safety requirements for educational occupancies, all under certain terms and conditions.

Significant oversight over District facilities is essential. This legislation will implement a critical layer of evaluation and safety certification. This is particularly essential given the toxic nature of conditions, including asbestos and lead, that persist throughout our schools.

PFT's [package of testimony on the legislation here](#).

SUPPORT: CHARTER SCHOOL REFORM



Charter Moratorium

Coupled with the state legislative efforts, we urge a local moratorium on new charters and encourage discussion and action on all levels to ensure that charter school funding and oversight is thoroughly overhauled.



Charter Oversight

For too long, charter schools have operated under different criteria than traditional public schools. The oversight mechanisms are deeply flawed, and the funding inequities have systematically led to the siphoning of resources from traditional public schools. The different oversight and funding mechanisms are problematic. For example, charter school educators are exempt from the teacher evaluation system, and up to 25% of their teachers do not have to be certified.



Reforming Charters' Special Education Funding

For students with special needs, charter schools receive a set amount regardless of the student's individual needs. In traditional public schools, the funding is designated by the student's need classification. This leads charter schools to actively pursue recruitment of students with special needs that do not require significant interventions and to discourage enrollment of students whose needs are more costly.

OPPOSE: VOUCHERS (Ex: ESAs, EITC)



No matter the form, vouchers harm public schools. Whether in the form of EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) expansion, ESA (Education Savings Accounts) creation, or any other mechanism, vouchers siphon money from traditional public schools without any fiscal, operational, administrative, or academic performance

accountability or transparency.

Schools receiving EITC funding, despite being paid with taxpayer money, may (and do) refuse to enroll, or restrict enrollment of, students for virtually any reason, including religious affiliation, disability, discipline, or academic history. Instead of working to identify ways that the legislature can live up to its constitutional obligation to fully and fairly fund public education, EITC and any form of vouchers sets the stage for another corporate giveaway and an inequitable distribution of resources. Tax breaks at the expense of our young people must be vehemently opposed.

SUPPORT: FUNDING MECHANISMS

This list of funding mechanisms is not exhaustive, but rather represents a sampling of legislative efforts that the PFT supports. It is critical for city, state, and federal officials to work on a comprehensive plan to secure funding for public schools.



Addressing Tax Abatement

At the City level, we should eliminate corporate tax breaks and severely restrict the tax abatement. [Good Jobs First's recent nationwide report](#) shows that corporate tax breaks and abatements in Philadelphia cost more than \$112 Million in lost revenue for schools in 2019. This is--by \$40 Million--the largest loss for any school district in the nation. We are in support of proposals to entirely eliminate the portion of the abatement that should be funding the District.



Additional funding mechanisms for education must also be secured at the city level. We will advocate for and support measures that increase the resources that support our students and educators. This includes resources that invest in the services outlined on p.1 of our platform.



Passage of the Full Funding Budget

The Full Funding Budget is an historic proposal that utilizes existing funding to finally invest the resources necessary for our young people to thrive. This legislative package must be a top priority for 2022's budget.

We urge the passage of the Full Funding Budget, as proposed in January 2022 by Democratic leaders in both the PA Senate and House. This package of legislation would invest over \$1 Billion dollars into facilities across the Commonwealth. This is a forward-thinking legislative package that will help not only address the facilities crisis but also provide myriad other critical investments into our children and public education.

- \$1.1 billion into the Fair Funding Formula
- \$750 million into Level Up (targets 200 districts with the most inequitable funding, and largest adequacy gap)
- \$1.1 billion into school facilities
- \$250 million into historic staffing problems
- \$125 million into mental health supports
- \$100 million into academic supports
- PFT's [statement on the proposal here](#). More on the [proposal here](#).



Restoration of the Charter School Line Item

When the Corbett administration eliminated the Charter School Reimbursement, public schools across the Commonwealth lost \$224 million in funding from 2009-2010 alone.

Philadelphia's share was \$109 million. Estimates for today balloon to \$300 million in lost revenue for public schools. (tinyurl.com/RFAreport)



Application of the Funding Formula to All Education Funding

Today, only 11% of Basic Education Funding runs through the formula. The formula is designed to ensure that children learning English, children with special needs, and students experiencing poverty, have access to the resources they need to thrive. This is an imperative step towards equity in education.



Passage of a Green New Deal for Public Schools

Philadelphia's schools need a Green New Deal, and we need it now. Not only does it provide an historic 1.43 trillion dollar investment in our schools, it does so in a way that addresses inequity, that creates union jobs, and that truly moves the needle on environmental sustainability. Addressing the toxic schools crisis while investing in sustainability and the future of our young people is an essential step forward.



Passage of Build Back Better

PFT's [statements on Build Back Better here](#) and [here](#).

In Pennsylvania, passage of the BBB plan means real, tangible investments in programs for children and families that we have been fighting for for years:

- Childcare for over 730,000 children up to age five
- Free, quality preschool for an additional 204,000 children
- Extension and expansion of Child Tax Credit for hundreds of thousands of children

SUPPORT: WORKERS' RIGHTS



We will be monitoring legislation to identify any anti-worker bills that are advancing, and we will vehemently oppose efforts to prevent workers from advocating for better working conditions. We oppose privatization efforts, and we oppose any and all anti-union legislation. Further, we will continue advocating for fair and equitable contracts for educators and all of the labor movement.



Passage of Senate Bill 310

At a state level, we support the passage of legislation that extends Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) protections to public sector workers. Currently, public sector workers, including educators, are excluded from basic workplace health and safety measures. More on SB310 [here](#).



Passage of Richard L. Trumka PRO Act

At a federal level, we support the passage of the PRO Act which protects the right to organize and addresses deep flaws in federal labor laws. More on the PRO Act [here](#).



Passage of Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act

This legislation seeks to empower public service workers with the freedom to join a union and collectively negotiate for fair compensation, safer job conditions and better public services for the communities they serve.