



PHILADELPHIA

FEDERATION of TEACHERS

Jerry T. Jordan, President | No More Excuses Press Conference

May 12, 2022 | FS Key School | 4:15 PM

Good afternoon.

- Thank you to my **Senator Hughes**, **Representative Fiedler**, and **Senator Saval** for organizing today's event and for your ongoing partnership.

On March 29, 2019, so many of us here today stood outside this very school, the oldest school building operating in the school district of Philadelphia, to launch the **Fund Our Facilities Coalition**.

- We stood here then, just as we do now, to demand more for our children, our educators, and our school communities.
- In the time since our coalition launched, we have grown in strength.
- We have secured millions of dollars in remediation efforts.
- We have fought for changes small and large in the approach to a toxic schools crisis that quite plainly would never be tolerated in a wealthier, whiter school district.

And all the while, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been growing its coffers and squirreling away money in a rainy day fund. I've said it many times before: *it's literally raining in our school buildings now.*

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- Combined with **unspent** rescue plan funding and burgeoning revenues **far** exceeding projections, there is *thirteen billion dollars* available to end this crisis once and for all.

Representative Fiedler was with us the day we launched our coalition in front of Key School.

- I would be remiss not to note that across her District, the 184th, Representative Fiedler has been an *absolute champion* for this issue and so many other critically important issues.
- There's no better example of that fight than right here at Key. You heard from **Principal Cheung**, 5th grader **Heron Uzima**, and PFT member **Lorenea Meskill**, about the needs of their school building.

The PFT has issued a series of recommendations to the District regarding Key School, and in fact regarding many other school buildings.

- Jerry Roseman, our environmental scientist, observed damaged asbestos and also had major concerns regarding the state of the bathrooms in the building.

And yet, the Republican-controlled state legislature has continued to throw up its hands and essentially say to our young people: **so what.**

- It stops now. There is a plan to move us forward.
- There are 13 BILLION dollars to move us forward.
- Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and to continue our collective fight for a better tomorrow, a more equitable tomorrow.