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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMONWEALTH *of* PENNSYLVANIA

House Democratic Policy Committee Tour

Kensington Health Sciences

2463 Emerald St., Philadelphia, PA 19125

Wednesday, August 11, 2021 | 11 a.m.

Hosted by Vice Chair Mary Isaacson

TODAY'S TOUR LED BY:

**Melanie Harris, Chief Information Officer
Philadelphia School District**

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY:

**Arthur Steinberg, President
*AFT Pennsylvania***

**Jerry T. Jordan, President
*Philadelphia Federation of Teachers***

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AFT Pennsylvania
A Union of Professionals

AFT Pennsylvania
President Arthur Steinberg

*Testimony to the
PA House Democratic Policy Committee*

Wednesday, August 11, 2021 | Written Testimony

Thank you, Chairperson Bizzarro, Vice Chairperson Fiedler, and Representative Isaacson for inviting AFT Pennsylvania's testimony on the important and time-sensitive topic of returning to in-person learning this fall.

I am Arthur Steinberg, President of AFT Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. I am proud to submit the following testimony on behalf of our 36,000 members and 64 locals regarding the return to in-person learning.

As I have done the many times that I have testified in front of various committees throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to state unequivocally that although school *buildings* have been closed to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, *schools* have very much been open. And what our educators have achieved in the last 18 months has been nothing short of heroic given the circumstances.

I also want to state that educators want to be back in the classroom. We know in our bones – and data support this – kids learn better in person. Even before any vaccine was approved last summer, 76 percent of AFT members across the US said they were comfortable returning to school buildings if the proper safeguards were in place. But we all know that it took a new President to get the federal government to get the resources needed to return to school safely.

That was well before the emergence of the Delta variant, which has proven to be nearly twice as transmissible as the previous coronavirus and continues to rage throughout the nation. And that was before the availability of vaccines, which have now been administered to over 166 million Americans and is nearly 100% effective in reducing infection and/or intensity of the infection from COVID-19.

AFT Pennsylvania believes that the best back to school plan is a layered mitigation approach, consisting of vaccines for all educators, staff, and eligible students; testing staff and students regularly; and abiding strict masking and physical distancing requirements. And, all of these must be coupled with the continued improvements in ventilation systems, whose problems far predate the pandemic.

Vaccines

The first, and most effective virus mitigation practice is vaccinating all educators, staff, and eligible students.

The speed with which the mRNA vaccines were created was nothing short of a miracle, even with 30 plus years of research, and an “all-hands-on-deck” approach. Countless lives will be saved by the availability and administration of the COVID-19 vaccines. On average, the three available vaccines are 90 plus percent effective, and we believe that everyone who can be vaccinated has a moral imperative to get vaccinated.

Our parent union, the American Federation of Teachers, reported in April 2021 that 85% of its members had already been fully vaccinated or planned to be vaccinated. We assume that

number has since climbed to over 90%, meaning educators have been among the most willing to roll up their sleeves and get their shots. However, given the contagiousness of the Delta variant in children and its ability to cause serious illness and hospitalization in children, we believe that vaccine mandates are appropriate, and we look forward to bargaining with our employers to ensure the same exemptions made for other vaccines are made for legitimate medical or religious reasons.

Every state and Washington, D.C., require routine vaccinations, such as for measles, mumps and rubella, as a condition of school attendance. There is no reason COVID-19 should be any different. A recent article in *Scientific American* stated the case very succinctly: "...vaccines not only protect the person vaccinated but also that person's family, neighbors, and classmates or co-workers. No one has the right to go into a crowded classroom or workplace unmasked and unvaccinated."ⁱ

Masking

The next layer of protection against the coronavirus is face masks. We support universal masking in schools for students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, which is especially important in settings with students who are too young to qualify for vaccination.

While we all believed that once we were all vaccinated, we could finally take off our masks, we have been wearing them longer than some maybe expected. However, the truth is that *not everyone* has been vaccinated. Children under 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine and are still vulnerable to this virus, especially the Delta variant, which has infected more than four million children so far.ⁱⁱ

Masking must be enforced by educators, staff, and administrators.

Testing

The final layer in COVID-19 mitigation in schools must be a robust testing regime.

Again, we believe students ought to return to in-person learning. However, with the return to school buildings comes the risk of outbreaks. An October 2020 report produced by The Rockefeller Foundation, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security aggregated several of the studies that have been performed in education settings and with children since the pandemic began.

The report found that "The first priority of a testing protocol is to ensure that there is accessible diagnostic testing for any school community member showing symptoms of Covid-19. If feasible, districts should also consider making diagnostic testing available for any student or staff member with a recent history of close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with a confirmed case."ⁱⁱⁱ We hope that school districts heed this advice and ensure that testing is as accessible as possible, for example by offering classroom-based testing.

A July 2021 study from Mathematica goes into depth of how to create a testing program based on which goals are prioritized, like in-school transmission prevention, in-school infection prevention, or in-person school days attended. Mathematica's model showed that "...routine testing can greatly reduce or eliminate within-school Covid-19 transmission."^{iv} Mathematica even created a "Covid-19 K-12 School Testing Impact Estimator" which uses the model created to assess the potential value of routine testing in K-12 schools, above and beyond other mitigation strategies.^v

In terms of the resources needed to implement robust testing, the Biden Administration earmarked \$10 billion from the American Rescue Plan to go to expand testing in schools.^{vi} We know this is the most effective means of keeping our kids participating in in-person learning and keeping our students and staff and their families safe.

Ventilation

Finally, our commitment to improved ventilation in schools far predates the pandemic. Our union, as a member of the Fund Our Facilities Coalition, has been demanding improvements in school infrastructure for years. However, the pandemic has brought the shortcomings of school ventilation into bright focus. Along with the other preventative measures described above, ventilation will reduce the likelihood of spreading disease. Also included in the American Rescue Plan, and according to the US Department of Education's "Return to School Roadmap," schools should use the American Rescue Plan's \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund to help schools prevent the spread of COVID-19 and address the needs of students, including improving ventilation in schools. This is long overdue and, hopefully, now we have the resources to make some real headway on facilities.

Closing

Thank you again for inviting our testimony. As the honorable members of this committee can tell, our members are anxious to get back into the classroom with their students, but we want to make sure that everyone is safe.

We must continue to encourage everyone who can to get vaccinated and to continue all other mitigation techniques so that we can rid ourselves of this virus. I look forward to working with you to ensure that our kids and educators can return to schools safely.

ⁱ Gostin, Lawrence. "Vaccine Mandates Are Lawful, Effective and Based on Rock-Solid Science." *Scientific American*, 5 Aug. 2021, www.scientificamerican.com/article/vaccine-mandates-are-lawful-effective-and-based-on-rock-solid-science.

ⁱⁱ Silva, Daniella. "What Top Pediatricians Want You to Know about the Delta Variant and Children." *NBC News*, 22 July 2021, www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/what-top-pediatricians-want-you-know-about-delta-variant-children-n1274536.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Rockefeller Foundation, et al. "Risk Assessment and Testing Considerations for Reducing SARS-CoV-2 Transmission in K-12 Schools." The Rockefeller Foundation, 14 Oct. 2020, www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/risk-assessment-and-testing-considerations-for-reducing-sars-cov-2-transmission-in-k-12-schools.

^{iv} Vohra, Divya, et al. "Implementing Covid-19 Routine Testing in K-12 Schools: Lessons and Recommendations from Pilot Sites." *Mathematica*, 26 July 2021, www.mathematica.org/publications/implementing-covid-19-routine-testing-in-k-12-schools-lessons-and-recommendations-from-pilot-sites.

^v <https://covid-school-testing.mathematica.org/start>

^{vi} Rogers, Lindsay Smith. "Outbreak, Interrupted: Why Testing Is Important for K-12 Schools." *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*, 2 Apr. 2021, www.jhsph.edu/covid-19/articles/outbreak-interrupted-why-testing-is-important-for-k-12-schools.html.



PHILADELPHIA
FEDERATION of TEACHERS

PFT President Jerry T. Jordan

Written Testimony Submission

PA House Democratic Policy Committee

Topic: Safe and Healthy Back to School

August 11, 2021

Introduction | P.3

Section 1: Toxic Schools | p.4

Section 2: Covid Precaution and Prevention | p.5-6

Section 3: Funding and Resources | p.7-8

Conclusion | p.9

Attachments

Introduction

As we continue navigating the deadliest pandemic any of us has ever seen, I want to thank Representatives Fielder and Isaacson for hosting this important hearing. I am pleased to offer written testimony outlining a number of key areas of concern surrounding a full and robust return to in-person learning.

Let me be clear: The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers wants and supports full, five day a week in-person instruction for all students. And we need to ensure the safety of students and staff. With the Delta variant surging, we cannot let our pandemic fatigue and desire to return to “normal” allow us to collectively shirk our responsibility to keep our communities safe from this virus. The desire to ensure the safety of all of our young people and the educators who serve them should not be a partisan issue.

And this is exactly why our union has, from day one of the COVID-19 crisis, looked towards real and safe ways to move towards a return to in-person learning. Our underfunded school buildings predated the pandemic and left us behind the curve in bringing students back into buildings. In order for us to be able to meet the mitigation standards set forth by the CDC, Philadelphia had to do more with less.

There are three main areas of concern that I would like to address today:

1. The toxic schools crisis
2. Specific COVID related safeguards, including vaccination, testing, and masks
3. Funding

Section 1: Toxic Schools

The toxic schools crisis in Philadelphia and across the commonwealth is emblematic of just how profoundly the deep seated, systemically racist underfunding of our schools has impacted our students. Our young people, the majority of whom are Black and brown and experiencing poverty, have had to endure conditions that would never, ever be tolerated in wealthier, whiter school districts.

The school facilities crisis is a searing example of this atrocious inequity, and it's exactly why we formed the [Fund Our Facilities Coalition](#) to identify real, workable solutions to the **decades of neglect that have left toxic conditions plaguing our schools.**

Our fight for fully funded schools--ones that are safe, healthy, and free from toxins like lead and asbestos--continues in earnest. In May of 2021, the PFT issued a deep dive report into the scope of, and the real solutions to, our devastating facilities crisis. In it, we provide data, analysis, and searing photos of how this crisis impacts our children and staff. I invite you to read the report in its entirety [right here](#). A copy is attached for your review.

Section 2: COVID Precaution and Prevention

Vaccination

It is imperative that we not forget that the most effective means of stopping this deadly virus is the vaccine. The PFT has championed vaccine access even before its release, and we have continued to urge our members to get vaccinated. Providing information and ways to get vaccinated has been critical. We pushed hard for our members to get access to the vaccine, and were successful in achieving a District-CHOP partnership that offered the vaccine to every District employee. We have since learned that over 50% of District employees were vaccinated through this program, with thousands more likely vaccinated outside of the program.

In order to ensure that we are doing all we can to support the health and safety of our students and staff, the PFT supports the position [outlined by AFT President Randi Weingarten](#), and we are fully prepared to support a negotiated vaccine mandate for staff. This will include important exemptions for medical and religious reasons, and as all items related to working conditions, must be implemented utilizing the collective bargaining process. But again let me be clear: this union has never, and will never, stand in the way of the health and safety of educators and students alike.

Nationally, 90% of AFT educators have been vaccinated, and while we do not have statistics for our members, we are continuing to encourage our members to get the vaccine. We also applaud the District's efforts to get students vaccinated and urge them to do even more. It is also important to remember that PFT members represent only a portion of the entire District staff.

We cannot forget that right now, children under the age of 12 are not yet

eligible for the vaccine. That means that in every single classroom from PreK through 6th/7th grade, the only people that may have been vaccinated are the staff. Ensuring that other mitigation measures are in place will be crucial.

Mask Compliance, Social Distancing

Full mask compliance is crucial. Over the summer, we learned of too many summer programs where mask wearing was not enforced. We cannot be lax here, and policies and procedures to ensure mask wearing are critical.

So too must we continue to engage in efforts to promote social distancing. Though we are welcoming a full cadre of students back in September, we must continue to monitor CDC guidance and efforts around social distancing.

Testing

COVID testing is another key safety measure. In the spring, the District rightfully implemented a robust student and staff testing program. For the fall, however, they have indicated their plans to not test students who are asymptomatic. We emphatically disagree with this recommendation. We are still learning much about how COVID spreads among young people, and so to forgo testing, while tens of thousands of our students are not yet even eligible for a vaccine, is absolutely the wrong decision.

We urge the District to reinstate a robust testing program for students and staff.

Section 3: Funding and Resources

Our fight for equitable education funding continues. And this union will continue our deep commitment to fighting for the resources our students so richly deserve.

There was an unprecedented investment via the American Rescue Plan, but unfortunately, this year's budget left far too much funding squirreled away for a "rainy day," when we know it is raining right now in our school buildings. The budget, passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor, left billions in the bank, and failed to fully and equitably invest in our young people. Further, we urgently need for the legislature to move forward on proposals to run all basic education funding through the fair funding formula. These are decisions that will have an enormous positive impact on the lives of our young people.

As we look to invest the billion dollar influx of funds from the American Rescue Plan, the PFT, in partnership with the Fund Our Facilities Coalition, issued a community survey to help shape our collective response to allocating the American Rescue Plan funding.

Over 4,600 respondents completed the survey. Respondents answered questions about their top priorities and were also given the chance to share open feedback.

The **top three identified priorities** included the following:

1. The first priority was **facilities remediation and/or modernization**, with nearly 81% including it as a key priority, and nearly 75% including it in their top three priorities.

2. The second priority was **mental health supports** for students, with nearly 65% including it as a key priority, and 47% including it in their top three priorities.
3. And the third priority was **classroom supplies**, including books and technology, with nearly 57% including it as a key priority, and nearly 32% including it in their top three priorities.

A close fourth was tutoring and 'extra' academic opportunities during the year, garnering over 53% identifying these supports as key, with 31% identifying it as a top three priority.

You can read our full report on the survey [right here](#).

Conclusion

We know that our students benefit immensely from being in school buildings, in-person, with their teachers and school staff. We also know that every child and school staff member needs and deserves to learn and work in conditions that are safe and healthy. And, we know that our students need and deserve equitable learning resources. This union is deeply committed to continuing to advocate and fight for public education.

Thank you Representatives Fiedler and Isaacson for hosting this important hearing, and for allowing us to provide written testimony to outline some of our priorities as we return to full in-person learning this fall.

Attachments:

1. [May 2021 Report](#) on Scope and Solutions of School Facilities Crisis
2. [April 2021 Report](#) on American Rescue Plan Spending Priorities

Appendix 1: May 2021 Report Facilities Crisis Scope and Solutions

School District of Philadelphia Facilities Crisis

SCOPE AND SOLUTIONS: AN UPDATED REPORT

MAY 2021

PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

JERRY T. JORDAN, PRESIDENT



SECTION 1: SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The toxic schools crisis in Philadelphia and across the commonwealth is emblematic of just how profoundly the deep seated, systemically racist underfunding of our schools has impacted our students.

Our young people, the majority of whom are Black and brown and experiencing poverty, have had to endure conditions that would never, ever be tolerated in wealthier, whiter school districts.

The school facilities crisis is a searing example of this atrocious inequity, and it's exactly why we formed the [Fund Our Facilities Coalition](#) to identify real, workable solutions to the **decades of neglect that have left toxic conditions plaguing our schools.**

- Decades of neglect that led SEIU worker Chris Trakimas to lose his life after a boiler explosion at FS Edmonds.
- Decades of neglect that lead then first grader Dean Pagan to suffer lead poisoning after eating lead paint chips from his desk.
- Decades of neglect that led to a devastating mesothelioma diagnosis for PFT member Lea DiRusso, who spent her career teaching in buildings with known, damaged asbestos.
- Decades of neglect that led Chelsea Mungo, then a fourth grader at Cassidy Elementary, to write to her State Senator and ask why the color of her skin impacted how her school is funded, and shared with him that she feels like she is in prison or a junkyard when she is in what is supposed to be a sacred place of learning.

In addition to systemic disinvestment and severe underfunding, pervasive and significant failures in District oversight, governance and management of buildings has resulted in the erosion of public trust and confidence in District leadership and management.

What follows are a number of critical facilities issues, process-based concerns, and a number of needed action items:

Section 2: Urgent Facilities Issues

- 2a. Overall Conditions
- 2b. Lead in Water
- 2c. Lead in Paint
- 2d. Asbestos
- 2e. Ventilation
- 2f. Moisture & Mold
- 2g. Roofing Issues

Section 3: Process Based Problems

Section 4: Action Items

Section 5: Conclusion

Appendices 1-3: Examples of recent asbestos, moisture/mold, and roofing problems.

Appendix 4: Photos of recent facilities conditions.

SECTION 2: URGENT FACILITIES ISSUES

2A. OVERALL CONDITIONS

In 2015, the SDP contracted with Parsons Environmental & Infrastructure Group to have them conduct a Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) of all Philadelphia schools. The Parsons FCA report for the District, along with individual school reports, was publicly released in January 2017 and identified the following problems and issues:

- District buildings (school inventory) had a “cost of replacement value” (CRV) of > \$14 B.
- District buildings had an average age of 66 yrs (compared to a national average of 42 yrs.)
- Current average age = 70+ years old (80% of buildings are >70 y.o.)
- There was a documented 25-year deferred maintenance backlog of needed work.
- There was a documented \$4.5 B Maintenance & Operations (M&O) need associated with the backlog.
- There was a capital infrastructure need of more than \$3.3 B (in addition to the M&O need)
- The “current” financial needs/cost at the time was pegged at almost \$8 B -- nothing even remotely close to that number was ever devoted to either necessary capital improvement or M&O so continued deterioration is, and was predictable.

According to the 2015-2017 FCA (referring to the FCI values in the Parsons report) the overall District FCI rating was > 32%, reflecting an exceptionally advanced state of deterioration.

- The schools in poorest condition were elementary schools and closed schools (FCI > 37%)
- 85 schools had FCIs of between 40% & 60%
- 20 schools had an FCI of > 60%
- \$3.5 B was recommended to be spent within the 5-year period (2015 – 2020) to address priority needs
- \$3.1 B was needed for O&M & Health & Safety

FCI % Range	Recommended Action
<15 %	Minimal Capital Funding Required
15 to 25%	Refurbish Systems
25 to 45%	Replace Systems
45 to 60%	Building should be considered for major renovation
> 60%	Building should be considered for closing/replacement

In 2020, the District again contracted with Parsons to re-inspect all schools and to update the FCA assessments from six (6) years ago.

The District has refused to disclose or provide any information related to updates to the FCA since 2017 or how/if they used the data for planning purposes over the past 4-6 years. Finally, they are now “updating” the FCA survey work but without providing any information, data, or collaboration.

2B. LEAD IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER

In 2016, PFT and others pushed for lead testing of water in all drinking water outlets in all Philadelphia schools and for remediation work to be performed. We also conducted a nationwide survey of what other Districts had been able to accomplish around the country and made recommendations to the District and offered to work in collaboration with them. At the time, our participation and recommendations were ignored.

After a push from City Council and subsequent hearings, the District was required to engage in another round of testing, to share the information obtained openly, to afford stakeholders the opportunity to observe testing, and to ensure proper remediation work was done. Those activities were required and the District’s testing of water outlets was done and remediation work as well as the installation of 1,000 + “hydration stations” in all schools was a result of this effort.

A contractor, ANDalyze/Terra Phase was involved in those testing activities starting in 2016 and Keating Environmental Management (KEM) was responsible for coordination and oversight. Data was collected (supposedly) for all outlets in all schools.

District stopped cooperating with PFT and other stakeholders in 2019 and has failed to provide access to data and information from that time forward.

2C. LEAD IN PAINT: P&P ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXPANSION

Following the documentation (as a result of joint assessment by PFT & District) of the lead poisoning of a 1st grade student (Dean Pagan) at Comly ES in November 2017 and subsequent and continued public reporting, PFT advocacy, and collective action, the District was forced to take specific recommended remediation actions and to establish a lead “Paint & Plaster Advisory Committee.” It was this committee that District leaders promised would be expanded to include all environmental hazards and related facility condition deficiencies.

The P&P Advisory Committee had representatives from PFT, SEIU-32BJ, and CASA, as well as parent representatives from various communities. State Senator Vincent Hughes also participated on this committee.

The Committee operated in a closely collaborative manner with the District’s C.O.O., and directors of OEMS and other facility departments to review all data and information as it was collected, to participate in site assessment activities, to jointly develop testing and inspection protocols and procedures, and to review and help create and edit communication materials and approaches.

The committee played an active review, oversight, and advisory role and was *not* simply another “rubber stamp” mechanism for the District to “check the box” of public engagement without substantive engagement with stakeholders.

Throughout 2019 and early 2020, discussions were held with District leaders (Danielle Floyd and Jim Creedon) who agreed to expand the P&P Advisory Committee (as structured and operating) into a District wide Facility Environmental Advisory Committee (FEAC). The PFT, parent, and other stakeholders were asked to identify parent representatives for consideration and there was a promise to engage in a joint effort to broaden participation but to implement the FEAC with the same scope and substantive oversight, review and advisory role being played by the P&P Advisory Committee that had been in place for about 2-3 years.

Without notice or further discussion, the District simply decided to break their promises and established an EAC that has neither the access to comprehensive information nor the scope or charge to play an active oversight, review, and advisory role.

2D. ASBESTOS: 10 BUILDING CLOSURES, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SF OF ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL

Problems related to the assessment, evaluation, inspection, remediation, and testing of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in our schools presents one of the most significant potential hazards to our staff and students for several specific reasons:

- With an average age of more than 70 years most of our buildings have accessible and large amounts of ACM
- There are hundreds of thousands of square and linear feet of ACM in classrooms, hallways, gymnasiums, cafeterias, air handling/fan rooms, special needs rooms, and many other areas that need attention
- Deteriorated physical conditions of facilities such as roofing, exterior walls, heating/cooling/plumbing piping, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, all contribute to ongoing asbestos damage to existing in-place ACM

Several recent examples can help illustrate the scale and scope of the asbestos problems faced.

1. Issues related to the major construction at BFHS/SLA with failures leading to exposures that sickened multiple students and staff. In following up on these complaints and issues in the summer of 2019, PFT identified serious asbestos concerns that had been previously gone unrecognized resulting in the need to delay opening of school to address asbestos and other issues (eventually a highly critical Inspector's General Report).
2. Ten (10) schools had to close because of asbestos concerns and issues (between 9/2019 and 3/2020 when the District shut down because of the pandemic) – in each case the District claimed the schools were safe before being forced to acknowledge the actual

situation. These were schools across the District including: BFHS, SLA, McClure, T.M. Pierce, Pratt, Hopkinson, Sullivan, Barton, Carnell, and Richmond.

3. Data collected by District Maintenance & Operations Department Facility Area Coordinators with school principals in November and December of 2019 documented thousands of specific facility condition and environmental problems that, in many cases required follow-up by environmental monitoring consultants.
4. District mandated inspections as per the EPA, "AHERA" (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act) regulation were performed in 23 schools in late 2019 and early 2020 but were so poorly done – based on our review which was brought to the attention of the District's Office of Environmental Management Services – that the process was stopped and a full review and new effort had to be restarted at considerable expense.
5. A draft "Asbestos Best Practices" plan was jointly developed by the PFT, SEIU-32BJ, and District representatives, at the direction of the Mayor's Office (12/2019- 6/2020) that, while not perfect, including many important protections but the District has still not agreed to implement many of the agreed-upon measures.
6. Asbestos abatement work performed during the past twelve (12) months – from 4/2020 – 4/2021 – has been extensive and, based on our reviews and on-site work, has resulted in several incidents where significant asbestos contamination was documented. These situations are of serious concern (some examples provided in Appendix 1).

2E. VENTILATION

Upgraded, and maintained Heating, Cooling, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems are critically necessary components for healthy, safe, and comfortable schools. The lack of adequate HVAC is a major, recognized contributor to increased illnesses and respiratory symptoms, including asthma that adversely impacts student and staff health and safety, contributes to absenteeism and lost time for both students and staff from school, and compromises educational achievement and opportunity. Considerable established and peer-reviewed research and studies have documented that in PK-12 settings with inadequate levels of fresh air (resulting in build-ups of Carbon Dioxide), educational achievement is decreased by 7% - 12% or more when accounting for other variables.

District HVAC systems and components - in most schools - are deteriorated and beyond their useful life and require major upgrades and replacement. Many of the interior system components are corroded and failing, and the controls used to provide fresh air, heating, and cooling have, in many cases, not been working for many years. The system condition - on a District-wide basis - results in significant impacts on students, staff, and building operation and also involves excessive costs for reactive and emergency maintenance in many locations.

When we talk about “ventilation” we are not typically including heating systems that do not provide air such as radiators and convectors that use hot, water, steam or even electricity to heat coils — however, for the purposes of this report, we have included heating systems (even those without “air”) in this summary. The major HVAC systems found in Philadelphia schools includes:

- Whole House Fan Systems - old original ventilation and heating systems present in many dozens of our schools built between about 1900 - 1940
- Classroom Unit Ventilator (CUV) systems that look like covered radiators placed along exterior classroom walls beneath windows and that are designed to use a mixture of fresh and recirculated air to provide a mixture of fresh and recirculated, heated, and/or cooled filtered air. Thousands of CUVs are present in dozens of schools built between about 1945 - current time
- Central Air Handling systems - more modern HVAC systems with ceiling and wall mounted registers for air supply and air return. Designed to provide a mixture of fresh and recirculated, heated and/or cooled filtered air.
- Radiators - Wall (and sometimes ceiling) mounted heating components that provide heat from steam or hot water.

A range of urgent **short, medium, and long term HVAC system needs with repair and upgrades** as well as capital improvement totaling many tens of millions of dollars (for short term) to the hundreds of millions of dollars (for medium and long term) fixes is required and falls into the following categories:

1. Ensuring existing system operation and function specifically to ensure provision of adequate levels of fresh, outside air — a gross lack of fresh air currently exists in the majority of school locations for most of the school year.
2. Ensuring adequate and effective heating and cooling is provided on a routine and ongoing basis - hundreds of complaints are received each year due to failing heating and cooling systems and components at the room and school levels.
3. Ensuring that system components are maintained to prevent failures leading to major water leaks and the build-up of mold and microbial growth.
4. Ensuring effective and basic operation of thermostatic controls.
5. Ensuring that units are properly and routinely cleaned and that filters are adequately maintained and changed.
6. Ensuring that increased airborne contamination by environmental hazards, such as asbestos, mold and other agents is not facilitated by the condition and operation of the HVAC system.

2F. MOISTURE AND MOLD

Moisture, dampness, humidity, and mold are consequential impacts and exposures related to problems with HVAC systems, as well as from problems related to the “building envelope” - the walls, windows, and roof of the school that serve the function of protecting interior building surfaces from exterior water penetration.

As with many of the District's mechanical and building systems, HVAC, roofing, exterior walls, and windows are seriously deteriorated and have aged beyond their useful life. The lack of necessary capital improvements results in these systems becoming more and more damaged, and thereby requiring more and more repair and response time and attention from the District's Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Departments; however, instead of receiving additional funding, the M&O department itself has been significantly underfunded and has seen personnel reduced by about 200-300 trades workers (roofers, plumbers, HVAC mechanics, etc.) over the past 10 years making it even more challenging to maintain aging buildings and infrastructure. Additionally, the lack of experienced and properly trained building engineering and custodial workers and an insufficient number of maintenance trades workers, has caused extremely significant problems, with excessively elevated costs, in multiple locations on an every-year basis.

There continue to be a very large number of major problems with significant mold growth throughout many occupied areas across many schools. Mold growth, and other microbial contamination from uncontrolled water intrusion, dampness, and moisture has been repeatedly documented with multiple recommendations made to more effectively fund and prioritize prevention and response activities, although very little of a systemic nature has been done by the District.

Failures to address the moisture, dampness, and humidity issues in a timely and effective manner have resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in emergency response costs (which could have been avoided) and major impacts on occupant health and safety as well as on educational achievement and programming.

Some relatively recent and notable examples of large scale mold damage and impacts are provided in Appendix 2.

2G. ROOFING ISSUES

The roofing system which includes gutters, downspouts, flashing, and other components is obviously a critical system necessary to maintaining interior condition integrity in our school buildings and for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all staff and students as well as preventing loss and damage to books and supplies, destruction of walls, ceilings and floors, and consequential damage including to asbestos and lead paint in addition to the development of mold growth.

Although it is very difficult to determine the exact number of roofs that have gone beyond their useful life span (because of District data-related limitations) or the number of roofs that are significantly damaged and experiencing frequent leaks, what is clear is that being able to

maintain roofs in a stable and intact condition is crucial. Unfortunately, available resources, combined with planning and systemic and accountable response deficiencies, have resulted in dozens of locations where impacts associated with cracking, crumbling, and failing roof systems caused major interior damage.

It should also be noted that in buildings where the average age is at least 70 years, it is expected - and has now been documented - that "legacy hazards" (asbestos and lead) are widespread throughout our schools. The reason to mention this here is that leaking roofs that allow water to penetrate into building interiors, often causes significant cascading and consequential damage and elevated remediation costs, when the water damages existing asbestos or lead. Increased remediation costs also result from the growth of mold and bacterial contamination that typically occurs, subsequent to roof leaks.

Serious and repetitive problems have been seen during past few years at many schools - a few examples are provided in Appendix 3.

SECTION 3: PROCESS-BASED PROBLEMS

In addition to the specific facilities concerns outlined, there are a number of critical process-based concerns that largely inhibit wholesale forward progress in tackling the urgent facilities crisis facing Philadelphia's public schools.

Some of these concerns include the following:

1. Lack of meaningful public **stakeholder engagement** in planning, priority setting, solution development, and effective and accountable implementation
 - a. This is especially highlighted by the details related to the District's currently in place "Environmental Advisory Council" structure instead of the promised Facility Environmental Advisory Committee (FEAC) structure (and functionality) that was supposed to be implemented instead.
2. Gross **failures related to substantive and broad-based District practices** related to providing real transparency and data sharing and access continue to be a central element of the District's unwillingness to be open and honest about school conditions
3. The lack of the development, with direct and near-direct stakeholder engagement, in the creation of a "**Comprehensive Educational Facilities Master Plan**" is a major problem that must now be fixed.
 - a. Comprehensive Education Facilities Master Plans are critically needed element in ensuring equitable, efficient, high quality, and sustainable infrastructure improvement. The District, despite numerous recommendations, still has no such plan.

4. There is an ongoing lack of **specific and granular collaboration**, coordination, and cooperation with independent expert stakeholders (e.g. PFT H&WF/U Environmental Science representatives) that has only worsened over the past 12 months.
 - a. District representatives, managers, and leaders have become less and less willing to work with PFT and others in a coordinated and collaborative manner to identify and remediate environmental hazards and related facility condition problems, further eroding school staff confidence in the health and safety of schools.
5. The **lack of adequate and accountable stewardship and efficient governance** of resources and programs re: construction, capital improvement, M&O, and environmental remediation activities in general has increasingly compromised public trust, and issues of social justice and equity as well as resulting in permitting potentially hazardous conditions to exist and pose risk to students and staff.
6. There has been a broad-based **failure to implement and follow specific and documented “Best Practices”** – and data-driven, evidence-based - approaches and efforts related to construction work in occupied buildings, asbestos remediation and testing activities, lead stabilization and remediation work, and multiple problems relating to HVAC system operation results in hazardous exposure conditions to occur.
 - a. These conditions, while presenting serious potential risk to all building occupants, place our most vulnerable students at heightened risk.
7. The District has **neglected to respond to pressing issues reported** through the PFT Healthy School Tracker App.
 - a. The **District has not responded to a problem submitted since 11/30/2020**, despite problems that have been submitted as immediate, urgent, or important.
 - b. The District gave no notice of their intent to neglect to respond to reported facilities concerns and is in fact obligated to respond to issues of health and safety.
 - c. Of the **281 problems** reported in the past two months since school buildings reopened, 0% have been responded to by District officials. **5% of those are listed as “immediate” (response within 24 hours), 22% as “urgent” (response within 72 hours) and 16% as “important” (response within 14 days)**. The remaining reports are uncategorized.
 - d. **In total, there are 1,475 outstanding problems on the app that need response.**
 - e. The District has publicly stated that they intend to put “eyes on” suspected damaged asbestos within 24 hours of a report, but this is clearly not taking place, and potentially exposing students and staff to damaged asbestos for longer periods of time due to the District’s refusal to respond.

Without open and transparent sharing of data and information related to environmental issues, programs and initiatives, and related facility condition data (from Operations, Maintenance, Capital Programs, & Environmental Management) it is exceedingly challenging to effectively evaluate, assess, and analyze District priorities, plans, and the funding decisions that directly impact and affect the health, safety, welfare, of occupants, and that matter from the standpoint of ensuring socially just and equitable academic opportunities and learning and teaching conditions for all students and staff.

SECTION 4: ACTION ITEMS

The PFT is ready, willing, and able to engage in the ongoing work to ensure that substantive, meaningful progress is made in order to mitigate the facilities crisis in our schools. We have been, and remain, deeply committed to ensuring safe, healthy schools for all of our students and staff. As such, we offer the following recommendations to address the ongoing concerns:

1. Immediate funding

- The time is now to address these untenable conditions. For a mere [\\$200 Million](#), we could remediate the most pressing environmental concerns within more than 225 School District of Philadelphia buildings.
- That includes, but is not limited to, electrical upgrades, lead and asbestos remediation and stabilization, ventilation upgrades, and COVID related safety protocol.
- **\$200 Million should be a floor—not a ceiling.** This is the bare minimum, and really will only begin to scratch the surface of what our students need.
- The \$200 M figure is in addition to already planned upon facilities funding, which have already been committed to the budget.
- We should think further than that, and think about how and what a real plan to not only remove the hazards but also to really modernize spaces and ensure that our students are afforded access to the education facilities they so richly deserve. To do this will require significant investment beyond \$200 Million.

2. Establish the FEAC (Facility Environmental Advisory Committee)

- This committee must include expert, experienced, and independent (e.g. the PFT's Environmental Science Director) as well as public stakeholders consistent with promises and representations from the District and that the committee's scope be defined to include the following:
 - A substantive role in planning, priority setting, solution implementation development, and oversight and advice for all environmental issues throughout the District.
 - The FEAC to be provided with all facility construction related environmental hazard data, documents, records, and materials needed to perform an effective oversight and advisory role.
 - The FEAC to work in a joint and collaborative fashion with District leadership and management to develop a Comprehensive Educational Facilities Master Plan to form the basis for priorities and implementable solutions for sustainable school infrastructure improvement.

- The District should immediately implement agreed upon Best Practice approaches for asbestos, and should work in a joint and collaborative fashion with the FEAC to develop sets of best practices for lead, mold, and other hazardous condition evaluation, assessment, testing, and accountable solution implementation.
- The FEAC should be appointed and assigned to develop and publish public reports and information updating all stakeholders about facility condition and environmental hazard issues, approaches, and initiatives in an updated and ongoing manner and should provide presentations, written summary reports, and other status update information directly to the City Council, Mayor's Office representatives and Board of Education Members for their review, consideration, and action.

3. Data Access, Sharing, & Transparency

- The District should immediately live up to its statements about data access, sharing, and transparency by providing specific details, reports, records, contract/work scopes, and similar documentation about all ongoing facility condition evaluation and planning work, related to capital improvement projects and maintenance and operations activities as well as all environmental assessment and related project activities to include access to underlying data and information for all work related:
 - The current FCA efforts by Parsons
 - The Environmental Data Management efforts being undertaken by Done Safe, Inc
 - All Asbestos evaluation, assessment, remediation, and testing work – planned and ongoing
 - All Lead-in-Paint evaluation, assessment, remediation, and testing work – planned and ongoing
 - All Lead-in-Water evaluation, assessment, remediation, and testing work – planned and ongoing
 - All HVAC-IAQ related mold, moisture and dampness evaluation, assessment, remediation, and testing work – planned and ongoing
 - Other materials still TBD

4. Response to Concerns

The District should immediately resume responding to issues submitted to the Healthy Schools App, and to issues reported in other manners. These reports from people in the buildings are key to identifying concerns. The District must respond to items marked "Immediate" within 24 hours, items marked "Urgent" within 72 hours, and items marked "Important" within 14 days.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

The work ahead is crucial, and it is incumbent upon the District to work in partnership with the PFT and other stakeholders to ensure that facilities remediation and modernization are done in an efficient, effective, and safe manner. The health and safety of our students and staff depend on the District's willingness and ability to do this essential work quickly and correctly.

The urgency of addressing the facilities crisis cannot be overstated. This work can be done and it can be done well. We urge the District to adopt our recommended action items, and we urge lawmakers at every level of government to ensure that significant funding is appropriated to address the critical infrastructure needs that impact Philadelphia's young people and school staff each day.

In the **attached appendices**, you will find examples of serious concerns regarding many of the topics addressed in this report.

Additionally, in appendix 4, you will find a sampling of photos illustrating the severity of the facilities crisis in our schools. In fact, photos 14-20 are all from a single high school and submitted within the past week.

APPENDIX 1: ASBESTOS

SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS WHERE SERIOUS ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION PROBLEMS WERE DOCUMENTED:

1. Bethune ES – April 2020

Major asbestos remediation work in several areas including the cafeteria, gymnasium, boiler room, and classrooms with more than 25,000 SF of ACM and asbestos-contaminated materials removed. During this work, significant contamination issues, outside of contained work areas was documented.

2. Pratt ES – April 2020

Issues with work practice controls and set up of abatement areas resulted in cross-contamination problems and elevated airborne asbestos levels that were avoidable and could have been addressed by a more collaborative and joint process being in-place and accountably implemented as part of the planning process for this project.

3. Woodrow Wilson MS (several month project, 2020)

Air samples collected in May, 2020, documented significant airborne asbestos fiber contamination outside of the contained work areas.

4. Mitchell ES – May 2020

Air samples collected in May, 2020, documented airborne asbestos fiber contamination outside of the contained work areas. This information was shared with District OEMS representatives and measures to clean up and respond to the situation and to perform additional follow-up testing to confirm acceptable safety were implemented.

5. Sharswood ES—June 2020

Air samples collected in June, 2020, documented airborne asbestos fiber contamination outside of the contained work areas (room 217) and highlighted systemic problems with work site set-up and failure to follow Best Practices.

6. Carnell ES –July 2020

Air samples collected in July 2020, documented airborne asbestos fiber contamination outside of the contained work areas (room 217) and highlighted systemic problems with work site set-up and failure to follow Best Practices.

7. Gompers ES – May 2020 – December 2020

Significant construction activities were performed at Gompers ES during 2020, that included significant asbestos removal activities and testing. On several occasions, and consistent with

problems and issues at other schools, Best Practices were determined to not being followed and, during testing in and around the school auditorium in October 2020 a significant contamination issue was brought to our attention by building trades workers on site.

On 10/23 we were notified about a problem on the 1st Floor of Gompers with asbestos work in/near the auditorium that had resulted in what all considered to be an airborne asbestos fiber release into the auditorium, nearby hallways and entrance areas and some other locations. Construction workers had refused to continue work and the environmental monitoring firm originally assigned to perform project oversight was replaced.

Extensive additional cleaning and testing was required as response to the failures that occurred in the auditorium.

The conditions documented above resulted, to a significant degree, from the direct work and involvement by the PFT only following notification that the work area had been “completed” and ready for final testing. The problems in these schools, obviously, are not “one-offs”, rather they are systemic and pervasive problems. Our substantive participation at earlier points (during planning and job set-up) would likely have resulted in avoidance of the contamination issues, especially impacting “clean” outside the containment work areas.

APPENDIX 2: MOISTURE AND MOLD

SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS WHERE SERIOUS MOISTURE AND MOLD PROBLEMS WERE DOCUMENTED:

1. Cook-Wissahickon

Thousands of SF of mold growth throughout the library, destroying books, furniture and furnishings. If trained and experienced personnel were on site, this would have been easily preventable.

2. Lawton

Expensive HVAC system upgrades were improperly performed resulting in extensive mold growth in classrooms and other occupied spaces. Highlights problems with planning and oversight with respect to capital projects. A secondary, and significant problem was an issue with the system thermostatic controls.

3. OEC

Overbrook Education Center has a very vulnerable student population and the lack of adequate maintenance and operational control over new and older existing HVAC system components lead to a multi-month mold remediation project being required with many educational spaces being inaccessible to staff and students.

4. Muñoz Marín

In August of 2017, thousands of square feet of mold growth were documented in this schools in the air handling systems, on musical instruments, chairs, carpeting, curtains, and even staff "mail slots" in the main office. Similar conditions, although to a much lesser extent, were documented in 2015 & 2016 as well. PFT input about the potential "systemic" (in other schools with similar systems) nature of the problem and recommendations to identify and inspect other schools resulted in finding another 20 schools with mold growth. Total remediation costs likely exceeded \$1,000,000 and also the partial and temporary closure and loss of educational spaces.

5. Gompers

Uncontrolled and unrepaired (for several months) steam leaks in the newly renovated school library resulted in extensive mold growth and the damage and loss of books and other educational materials and supplies as well as furnishings and fixtures throughout the space.

6. Bethune

In October of 2018, more than 1200 square feet of mold growth was documented on ceilings and pipe insulation in at least 6 classrooms and other normally occupied educational ceilings. As reported by on site staff, and as obvious from the extent of the mold growth, these conditions had existed, even if to a lesser extent for several months.

APPENDIX 3: ROOFING ISSUES

SAMPLING OF SCHOOLS WHERE SERIOUS ROOFING PROBLEMS WERE DOCUMENTED:

1. Hill Freedman World Academy

Leak in roof above auditorium resulted in damage to the asbestos acoustical plaster ceiling with debris falling into the auditorium.

2. Lea ES

The “new” “L-Wing” of the school has had ongoing and repetitive roof leaks for many years resulting in damage to walls, ceilings and floors inside the hallway and classrooms of this wing. Additionally, newly modernized classrooms were damaged from the water intrusion that continued to occur from the documented and ongoing roof leaks.

3. Academy at Palumbo

A clogged and overflowing roof drain resulted in massive leak impacting several floors of the schools and causing significant damage to dozens of building areas. This situation caused the closure of large sections of the building and ended up with remediation costs in the \$100,000's of dollars for what was an easily preventable issue.

APPENDIX 4: PHOTOS

SAMPLING OF DOCUMENTED PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS 2017-2021

Photo 1– Elem. Classroom — Antiquated classroom unit ventilator, damaged/flaking lead paint, and obvious signs - and damage associated with - moisture and water intrusion.



Photo 2 – Elem. Classroom — Extreme water damage resulting in severe deterioration of lead paint, flaking with dust and debris on materials



Photo 3 – Occupied Gym/Lunchroom— Kids sitting and eating underneath severely damaged lead painted ceiling



Photos 4 & 5 – Mold Growth on Ceiling and Wall of Occupied Elem. Classroom - according to teacher, condition present for months — Associated with HVAC System Problems



Photo 6 – Elem. Bathroom – Mold growing on ceiling and ductwork



Photo 7 – Elem. Classroom — Repeat flooding from malfunctioning classroom unit ventilator resulting in extensive damage and mold growth to newly installed flooring — the original flooring was replaced for the same reason just a few weeks earlier. An example of what happens if the “root causes” are not addressed and also issues related to inadequate governance, oversight, and management



Photo 8—High School— Teacher described the conditions as existing for several months. The floor tile is an asbestos-containing material.



Photo 9 – ES – Classroom Unit Ventilator - Typical inside condition of the CUVs [dirty, rusted, leaking, & deteriorated with mold & bacterial slime]



Photo 10 – Elem. Boys Bathroom— Filthy conditions, leaks on floor and ceiling deteriorated/damaged and missing insulation on piping presenting a burn hazard from very hot heating pipes.



Photos 11 & 12- Bathroom — Accessible, damaged asbestos insulation between urinal and sink — this condition is present in multiple locations.



Photos 14-20: A sampling of dozens of photos received from ONE high school in the past WEEK. The photos represent lead paint, physical damage, and possible asbestos.









**Appendix 2: April 2021 Report
American Rescue Plan Spending Priorities**

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN SPENDING PRIORITIES: SURVEY RESULTS



Philadelphia Federation of Teachers

APRIL 28, 2021

From March 19th through April 25th, the PFT, in partnership with the Fund Our Facilities Coalition, issued a survey to identify issues of top priority in the allocation of the American Rescue Plan funding.

With the School District of Philadelphia set to receive more than \$1 Billion in one time funding, it is imperative that community input be incorporated into the spending plan. Over 4,600 respondents completed the survey, with a vast majority of the respondents being PFT members. Their insight, as well as the insight of parents, students, and community members is invaluable.

The questions were structured as follows:

- A general question identifying any/all issues of priority for spending
- Three questions in which respondents indicated their top three spending priorities
- A question specific to facilities and the investments needed
- Open ended feedback
- Identifying information

The top three priorities identified by respondents are the following:

Facilities remediation and/or modernization

Mental health supports for students (ex: in school groups, out of school programs)

Classroom supplies (books, technology)

The full results follow.

Section 1: Overall Priorities

Which of the following support staff/programs do our students and educators need as we deal with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis? *(Select all that apply)*

This question was to gauge an overall view of importance resources. The top priorities are broken down in subsequent questions.

Total respondents: 4,605

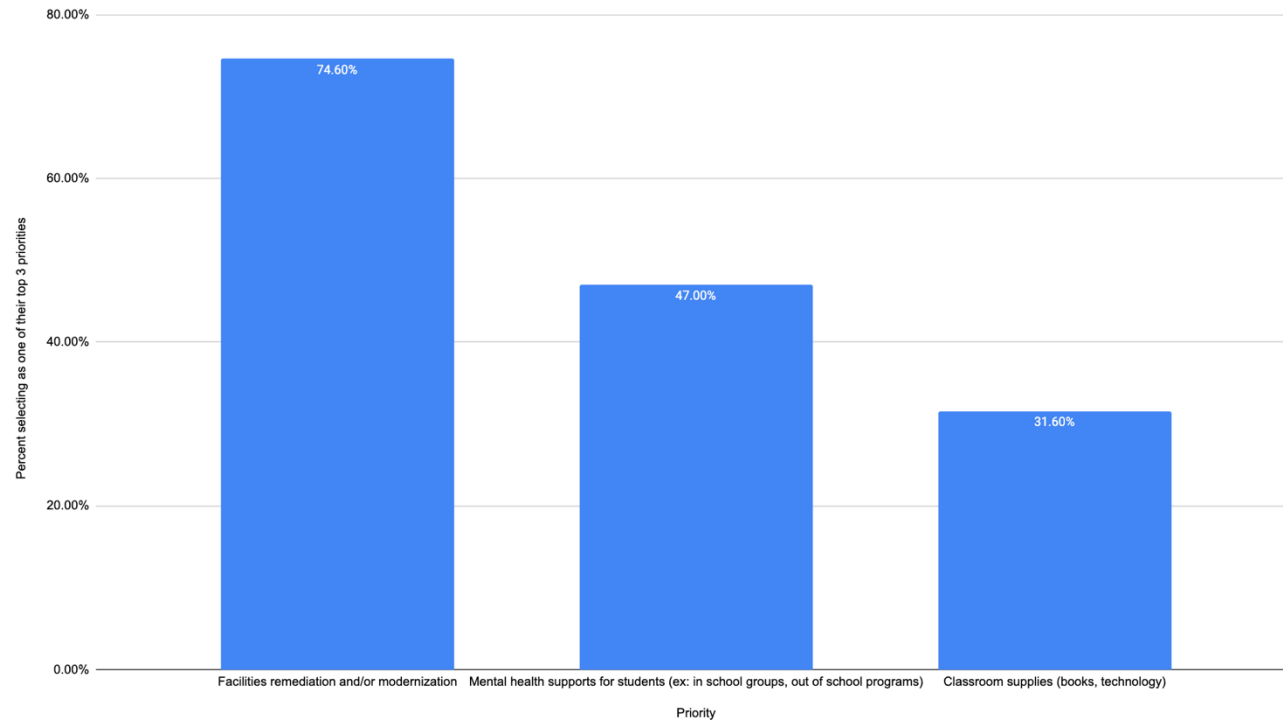
Resource	Number	Percent
Facilities remediation and/or modernization	3718	80.7
Mental health supports for students (ex: in school groups, out of school programs)	2988	64.9
Classroom supplies (books, technology)	2611	56.7
Technology for educators/school staff	2488	53.2
Tutoring/other 'extra' academic opportunities during the year (ex: additional staff for small group instruction, before/after school programs)	2411	52.4
Support services for parents/community (homework help, etc.)	1945	42.2
Extracurricular programming/staff & arts programming- field trips, etc.	1936	42.0
At home technology support for students (new/updated computers, internet access)	1904	41.3
Summer enrichment programming (arts, camps, etc.)	1445	31.4
Summer academic opportunities	1320	28.7
Language access support for families	1319	28.6
Professional development	937	20.3
Other	168	3.6

Section 2: Top 3 Priorities

Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for investments

Resource	Priority one	Priority two	Priority three	Total
Facilities remediation and/or modernization	2441	627	368	3436
Mental health supports for students (ex: in school groups, out of school programs)	631	875	660	2166
Classroom supplies (books, technology)	269	648	537	1454
Tutoring/other 'extra' academic opportunities during the year (ex: additional staff for small group instruction, before/after school programs)	361	536	537	1434
Technology for educators/school staff	210	508	549	1267
Extracurricular programming/staff & arts programming- field trips, etc.	114	325	441	880
At home technology support for students (new/updated computers, internet access)	134	318	362	814
Support services for parents/community (homework help, etc.)	66	168	336	570
Summer enrichment programming (arts, camps, etc.)	61	183	260	504
Summer academic opportunities	106	177	187	470
Language access support for families	22	58	127	207
Professional development	22	68	106	196
Other	168	114	117	399

Top 3 Priorities for Investment [Respondents selected 3 items; total % does not equal 100]



Top Three Priority Issues

Priority	%
Facilities remediation and/or modernization	74.6%
Mental health supports for students (ex: in school groups, out of school programs)	47.0%
Classroom supplies (books, technology)	31.6%

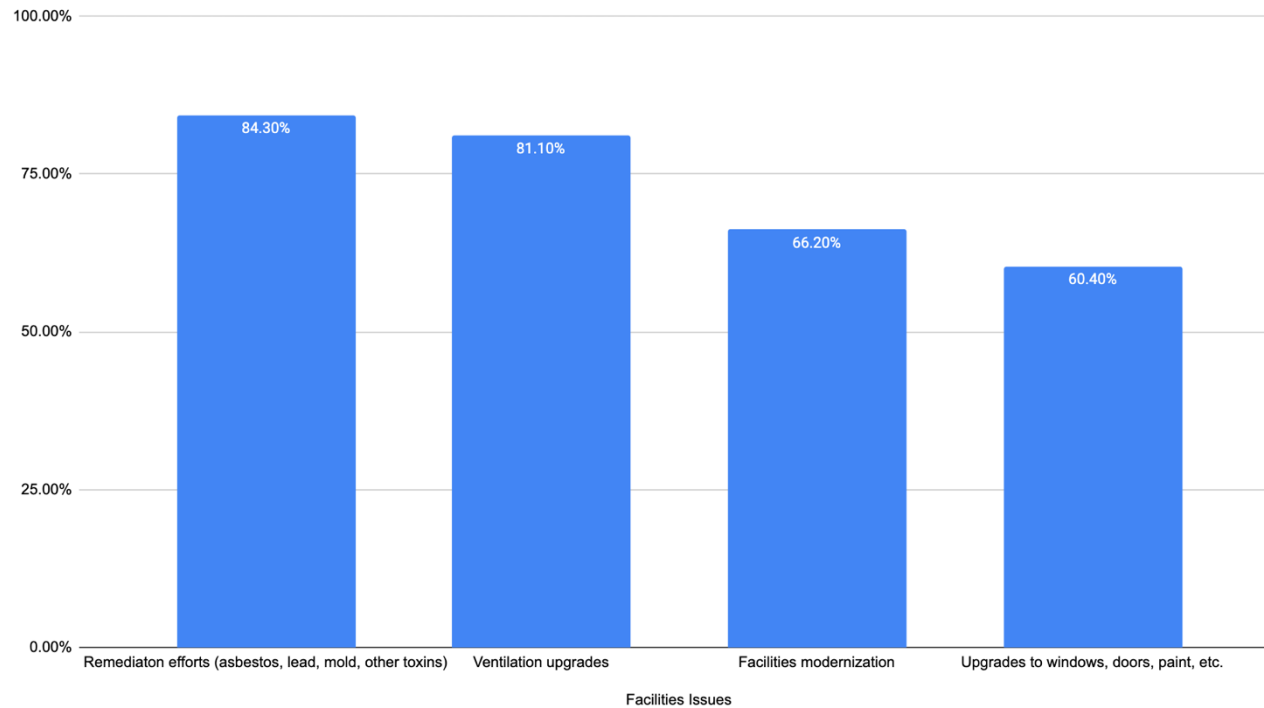
**Close fourth was Tutoring/other 'extra' academic opportunities during the year (ex: additional staff for small group instruction, before/after school programs) with 31.0% including it in their top 3 priorities.*

Section 3: Facilities Specific Question

Respondents were asked which facilities items were of concern to them (and were able to select all that apply):

Remediation efforts (asbestos, lead, mold, other toxins)	84.30%
Ventilation upgrades	81.10%
Facilities modernization	66.20%
Upgrades to windows, doors, paint, etc.	60.40%

What facilities issues are important to you?



Section 4: Open Feedback

Below is a sampling of the open ended feedback. While we worked to compile a representative sampling, not all items listed were necessarily frequently mentioned.

Two items of note:

- One of the most frequent additional suggestions was the addition of usable, inviting outside space for students, including playgrounds.
- Additionally, many respondents included requests for smaller class sizes and additional staff. These are emblematic of the significance of not allowing the ARP funding to be the only additional investments in our schools. We need recurring investments at the city, state, and federal level to ensure that we can provide appropriate staffing levels and lower class sizes and lower student/staff ratios for counselors, nurses, and other service providers.

A one-time investment in improving ventilation and temperature control will improve student's lives permanently, and prevent future outbreaks of many illnesses.
After facilities remediation, I believe the most important things to help our students heal from this pandemic is extracurricular and in-school art, theater, sports, clubs etc. programming. Creative outlets and the opportunity to do things they enjoy will be critical for mental health and recovery. With the \$1B, I believe we should try our best to ensure that schools can use part of that budget for programs that are typically the first to be cut.
After school sports.
All elementary schools should have playgrounds. All outdoor play areas in all schools should have paint lines for courts, nets for hoops, etc.
All money should be spent on modernizing schools and replacing chrome books in classrooms.
All should be provided with opportunities within the arts/technology sector... hopefully some can get apprenticeships as Phila comes along in the green technology fields
Anti-racism training for all staff
Any opportunity for the students to be social with one another. They have missed being with other children for over a year.
Attendance support programs.
Because this money is not stimulus and not something the district can count on in the future, it is imperative that it is used in a way that benefits the entire district in a way that modernizes school for the future. We will never have a chance again to make right the facilities issues that so profoundly affect the educational environments our students deserve. A child's zip code should not dictate the very basic ventilation needs of the facility the student must learn in. This has gone ignored far too long and must be made right once and for all.
Better choices in the food we serve our students.
BLACK HISTORY, phonics, handwriting, typewriting skills, BLACK HISTORY, and creative writing

Building modernization will have the greatest long-term impact on those we serve. Obviously, it won't solve all facilities problems in all buildings but it will go a long way to showing underserved PHL communities that local and federal government can function to the betterment of specific communities. Needs to be accompanied by intensive and thoughtful community outreach. Covid "slide" also needs specific attention.
Conflict resolution and mediation.
Conflict resolution, anti-gun program
Connections with community programs surrounding grief, community violence, social emotional learning, empowerment
Counseling groups facilitated by SDP School Counselors as part of any summer programming in order to address the grief and trauma experienced by many of our students.
Deaf and hard of hearing classes need special consideration during hybrid. Students can't be far from sign language. They need clear masks. They can't hear classmates who are virtual and need to see their ASL.
District wide racial equity curriculum; end to high stakes standardized testing
Do something that improves the day.
Drivers Education offered for all high-schoolers to give them something to look forward to. Social Skills for elementary and middle schools.
EC programs away from the computer screen, not necessarily sports which I am a huge advocate for, but programs where students can socialize and have fun!!
ESOL and Special education services need actual learning spaces. We have a high percentage of special education students and ESOL students and their needs are not being met like the regular education students.
Faster turnaround on supports for young students, particularly SIS and other behavior supports.
Food programs, housing, after school programs, grants, community involvement
Healthy environment will be #1. Increased mental health professionals are also a high priority need.
Hold the district more accountable with spending. Put the money into our schools and children in ways that will actually benefit them.
This is an opportunity for us to be able to make huge gains in remediating some of the critical facilities issues that present significant health concerns for our staff and students, in addition to an opportunity to provide our students some of the same CRITICAL basics that are standard in other areas, such as clean and functional outdoor play spaces.
I feel the mental health aspect is extremely important, however if students had safe building to go to that were welcoming environments that they could take pride in, maybe the mental health of students would improve by taking pride in their home away from home. I am fortunate to be part of a school environment where students are taking pride in the amazing upgrades that are happening and their morale is rising by the day.
I haven't seen a "learning regression" but I have seen students feel more uncertain and less confident. They desperately need space to talk to their peers and to have some mental health help.
I see mental health supports for students as an essential component in helping families deal with the aftermath of COVID
A critical piece of our SEL [social emotional learning] program needs to include outdoor playgrounds for our students, and I would advocate for these for each of our elementary schools. Our students need a place to play and practice the social skills that they learn inside our classrooms. This is not a trivial idea and I would recommend the book, "Games We Should Play in School" by Frank Aycox. It has an explanation of the reasons why play is so

<p>important for healthy child development. Our students deserve to have positive outlets where they can expend their boundless energy while at the same time learn and practice how to agree and disagree, among many other social skills, without serious consequences.</p>
<p>Art programs and after school programs will do a lot to bolster mental health in our students.</p>
<p>It critical this summer, more than ever, to provide our schoolchildren access to enrichment experiences such as art, drama, music and camps. These kinds of experiences, for far too long, have been viewed as "extras" for underserved communities, when they are necessary and beneficial over the long term for a child's social and emotional well-being, for building confidence that will extend into other areas of their life and expanding their life experiences, so they can imagine all the possibilities they have. I cannot say strongly enough how much I advocate for those making the decisions to consider that, now more than ever, let's allow our schoolchildren to experience joy, childhood and positive experiences after what has been and continues to be an extremely stressful year. I say this, having read, and encouraging those who will make the decisions, to read the research about the effects of the social isolation, stress and trauma, and disruption of life on our children. Let's not decide to put them in unairconditioned schools, working on Chromebooks, staring at a screen, disengaged, let's truly enrich their young lives - because it is through these kinds of experiences that we truly grow and develop! Thank You!</p>
<p>I think more BCAs and translators for school communications. Also, mental health services in languages other than English.</p>
<p>I think more opportunities for student support during the day and after school. Programs to support mental health and socialization since they have been gone for so long. such as Playworks, Arts and Drama programs in elementary. Tutoring to fill the gaps.</p>
<p>A fleshed out social studies curriculum. I have spent a year of digital learning with NO resources provided simply because we are not a state tested subject.</p>
<p>A more updated facility for my kids. At least one sensory room for special needs kids.</p>
<p>Equity in all SDP schools for all students. My school has a very large complex needs population with few resources to address domains being taught. Yet I've seen other SDP schools with classrooms designed and fully set up to accommodate all life skills domains.</p>
<p>I'm sure there are many more things that can be done in our schools. I'm not an education professional and hesitate to weigh in on how instructional, training, or school supply money should be spent, although I would tend to think that more counselors and fewer technology solutions are merited. I am a building design professional, and the current state of our facilities is shameful and appalling. This is not a complicated problem, it just requires abundant resources to repair the buildings and a prioritization list geared towards equity rather than which school community is the loudest or raises the most money on their own. It's both a fundamental need and an expression of respect for our students.</p>
<p>In school learning five days a week!</p>
<p>In school mentoring to address the violence in our communities</p>
<p>In school tutoring, college prep, trade school partners</p>
<p>Infrastructure only</p>
<p>Job opportunities. Real-world exposure to job options.</p>
<p>Just more support overall and cleanliness.</p>
<p>Less spending at the top. More spending at the bottom for staff and students.</p>
<p>Life skills/Extracurricular Activities/Arts/Drama Club</p>

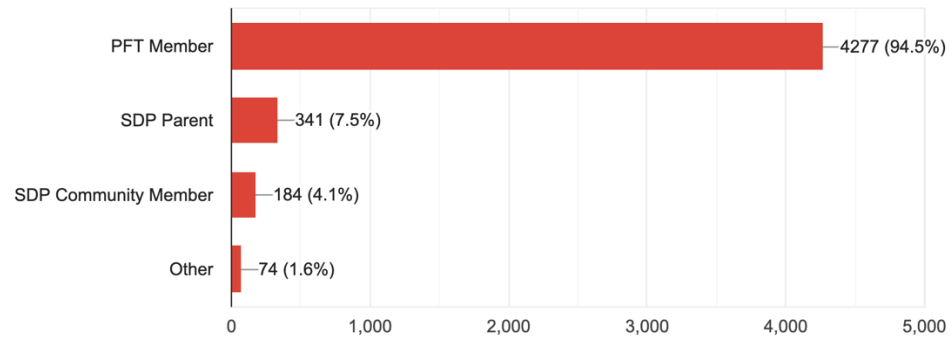
Make schools more student centered and enjoyable. Bring libraries into each school. Hire more African American teachers. Yes, that includes Black Men. Value the input of Retired Teachers.
Make sure they get plenty of food or a food pantry in the school so parents are welcome to come and feed their kids
Maybe we can try to make school not only a place to learn but also a place to feel safe and have some fun too. Some bright colorful paint, new clean floors, game and equipment for recess better quality food for lunch. Also some sensory rooms for our autistic and emotional students. A safe place where they can have their sensory needs met when needed.
Meditation or Mindfulness Programs need to be implemented at all SDP schools....PreK thru 12th grade.
Mental health services are critical, but only if the agencies are vetted for fidelity and have a history of efficacy.
Mental health services must be school-district based and NOT outsourced and must NOT be funded through students' health insurances. In the past, a lot of our students could not receive mental health services (STS) because they did not have the correct health insurance.
Mentoring programs are desperately needed in schools.
Modernization of supplies. Like digital textbook access instead of hard copy etc. if we have one to one tech we need to be able to access it all school day - so upgrading electric in all rooms to allow laptops to be plugged in etc.
More art and creative opportunities
More diverse staff and more trainings on systemic racism. Male Mentoring Programs.
Musical instruments for CIMT teachers
My first option is to allocate the funds for remediation and modernization of the facilities, in order to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the students and staff. The students should be the top beneficial primarily. For this, I strongly suggest and believe students are in desperate need of more mental health support inside of schools. Currently, school counselors are overloaded with supporting students. Mental health services are desperately needed for students outside of school, as well as, inside of school. Students need groups and other mental health professionals to talk with in a safe environment.
Need additional nursing support to complete mandated health screenings and COVID testing on all students along with meeting the healthcare needs of student population. This is very difficult to accomplish in a time efficient manner in a larger school where there is only one full-time nurse
Need more before and after school care in schools for the working parents
One on one reading and phonics assistance in the classrooms will be extremely helpful.
Opportunities to involve parents in their child's education.
Organized recess, outdoor eating areas, community projects like or gardens.
Our kids need access to ALL THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES as children in the wealthier/wealthiest districts. Primary among them is SMALLER CLASS SIZES. I just can't understand why we STILL squeeze our babies into classrooms of 30 with one teacher and expect to have a solid academic outcome just because we throw academics all day. Follow the research...
Parent trainings on how to best support their school age children.
Parental support, before and after school programs
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS ONLY - these are 1 time funds and should not be used on any non-renewable efforts.

Playgrounds. Adapted equipment (swings) for children w/ disabilities.
SDP as a District needs a bottom up approach with less direction from 440. Teachers need to teach using our vast knowledge of curriculum, content and student needs. The District doesn't need to buy a bunch of programs, spend money on consultants or purchase supplies from vendors and give us a choice of which ones we want (or them tell us which ones we need - as if we're not skilled enough to choose ourselves). Give money to the schools, let us tell them how we need to use it at school level then give us the space to do what's best individually for each school.
STEM activities/projects to help with their real world skills
Students in special education and ESOL will need additional supports both academically and social/emotionally including lower teacher/student ratios, extended day support, summer programs, and mental health supports that families don't have to struggle to access. As it stands now, children may be returning to buildings in the fall with less support than they had this year. How can schools effectively meet individual student needs without the staff needed to support them? I absolutely support efforts to make school buildings safe, but the next priority has to be enough personnel in buildings to make a difference for students.
Students should have a designated play area that is appropriate for children not just an open fenced in yard. A playground area would be nice for the kids to play at during lunch time.
Summer academic opportunities that allow a student to not just catch up (i.e. Summer school) but advance at their own pace would be beneficial.
Summer enrichment programs are essential at this point in time.
Summer program for preschoolers going to kindergarten
Support English Learners and their families
Support the many needs of the Deaf and Hard of hearing program. Upgrade technology and materials. Allow for programs such as iready or Aimsweb that are accessible to DHH kids. The materials currently in use cannot be effectively used for DHH kids.
The extracurricular activities are huge. While there's been no shortage of hand-wringing over "learning loss" what students are missing throughout this whole time is interaction with their peers - engaging in their passions. Yes, some of that has continued in small measures and in fits and starts, but it's hardly been a return to what was it for students. The sports, the clubs, the dances -- all of it -- that's the stuff that helps them develop as people. And bringing back those activities is going to have a much bigger impact on their development than whether they failed an online Algebra quiz during a global pandemic.
The safety of our children and staff should be first priority.
There must be an equitable distribution that benefits low income families and their schools and communities.
There should be a committee form to make sure that the money that the district is receiving be allocated properly to want the school really needs
We should focus every school on offering CTE or trades based training-there is a huge need for trades people and our kids need options!
Youth employment and paid internships.

Section 5: Respondent Information

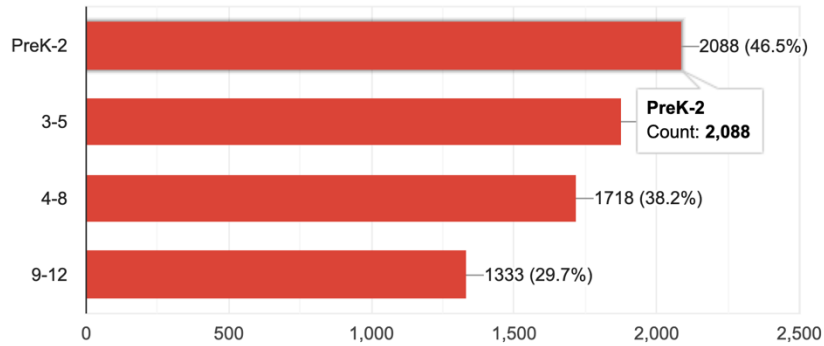
Completing survey as a...

4,524 responses



What grade bands are you representing in your responses (check all that apply)

4,494 responses



Section 6: Conclusion

The need for facilities investment, mental health support, and classroom resources are top items for the more than 4,600 respondents of the survey. The top item of importance noted was facilities investments. Facilities remediation and modernization is essential and must be undertaken in a collaborative, responsible, safe, and accountable manner. Additionally, mental health supports as well as classroom resources are critical and must be a significant portion of the funding allocation.

There are myriad additional items of importance that should also be considered. Technology, tutoring, extracurricular supports and many other resources are also items of critical importance to the respondents.

More than one billion dollars in funding can, and should, have long-term impact on our school communities. That can be achieved by ensuring that voices of educators, students, parents, and community members are heard in the process. With over 4,600 respondents, our survey provides an important starting point for this discussion.

Additionally, we must ensure that we continue to work towards a full and equitable funding system for public education—one that will not be achieved by this one time infusion of funding. This is, indeed, a once in a lifetime opportunity to ensure that we address critical needs of our schoolchildren. But it is not a panacea and does not absolve our local, state, or federal governments of their responsibility to fully and sustainably fund public education.