



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Action Plan Update 2018

Progress + Priorities

The future of our students is limitless.



A Message from the Superintendent

I believe that our students are smarter than what they know today, and more powerful than they can imagine."

I'm proud to report the significant progress we have made in implementing our multi-year Action Plan.

Student academic achievement is improving faster than state averages, and our graduation rate is the highest it's been in more than a decade.

We continue to invest in the best and brightest principals, teachers, and employees while maintaining steady management of our finances.

All of this has set the stage for something years in the making: the return of Philadelphia's public schools to local control in 2018.

Now, we must continue building on our momentum to ensure every child has access to an excellent public education. Progress is rarely easy, but we're moving forward thanks to the hard work and determination of so many.

With ceaseless energy and your ongoing support, we remain dedicated to advancing our Action Plan.

Our commitment to all our students—and our pride in them—is as limitless as their futures.

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent, School District of Philadelphia

Our Four Anchor Goals

Each of our anchor goals helps to define a high-quality school system. They underscore our belief that all students can achieve, and they focus our work to ensure that we are creating great schools in every neighborhood.

Our goals are set at 100% because EVERY CHILD deserves a high-quality education.

100%

ANCHOR GOAL 1

of students will graduate ready for college or career.

ANCHOR GOAL 2

of 8-year-olds will read on or above grade level.

ANCHOR GOAL 3

of positions are filled by great principals, teachers, and employees.

ANCHOR GOAL 4

of funding for great schools is secured with zero deficit.

Educational Equity

We will achieve educational equity when all students have the resources to graduate ready to succeed as fully engaged citizens of the world.

Even as institutionalized barriers and inequitable funding persist, we continue to expand equity, increase opportunity, and create national best practices so that all children can recognize and reach their full potential.

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

- **All students** and their families were informed about opportunities for Advanced Placement classes and options for high school, including neighborhood, charter, competitive admission, and career and technical education.
- **All high school students** were given free access to PSAT/SAT practice tests and individualized college-prep tools.
- **All K-2 students'** attendance and learning were further supported by ending school suspensions.
- **All 2nd graders** were tested for gifted potential, using more culturally-competent tools.





ANCHOR GOAL 1

100% of students will graduate ready for college or career.

For the third year in a row, Philadelphia's public school graduation rate has continued to increase. Now, we're focused on accelerating this trend.

GRADUATION RATE



To make sure all students can graduate ready for college or a career, we instituted 9th grade academies in all of our high schools. Academies welcome students to high school and provide individualized support to plan and track their successful path to graduation.

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

31

Philadelphia public high schools improved their graduation rates, some by double digits.

**HIGHER
SCORES**

on Keystone exams: Biology (+6%-pts.), Literature (+5%-pts.), Algebra I (+2%-pts.).

3,852

certifications earned by CTE students, qualifying them for post-graduation jobs.

2018 PRIORITIES

Equip every high school student with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to graduate on time and succeed in post-secondary opportunities.



Ensuring Success in High School

Tamika Jones-Tabbs, College/Career Coordinator, South Philadelphia High School

As high school freshmen, students meet new classmates, adjust to new teachers, and face new academic expectations.

To support successful transitions to high school, all 9th grade students can participate in Outward Bound to build friendships and experiences that show them how to trust themselves and one another.

For the rest of the year, the Outward Bound students are more confident, more ready to learn, and more excited to conquer challenges that lie ahead.

“At the start of the course, I was nervous, but then everyone cheered me on. Now I’m fearless.”

—Markell Ferguson, 9th Grader,
South Philadelphia High School





ANCHOR GOAL 2

100% of 8-year-olds will read on or above grade level.

In the first year of full implementation of our early literacy plan, the percentage of 3rd graders reading on grade level increased by five points, surpassing statewide gains.

EARLY LITERACY RATE



Three years ago, Philadelphia committed to ensuring every student is reading on or above grade level by age 8. We're delivering by providing all K-3 students with the highest-quality literacy instruction and the right books in their classrooms.

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ONE** early literacy coach in every elementary school supporting all K-3rd grade teachers.
- +900** 3rd-7th grade students are reading at the very highest level. 1,500 fewer students are reading at the lowest level.

**EVERY
GRADE
LEVEL**
**ONE
MILLION**

from 3rd-7th made gains in PSSA reading exams. 3rd graders posted the largest gains.

new books were distributed across every K-3 classroom for more than 46,000 students, funded by our Right Books campaign.

2018 PRIORITIES

Provide all K-8 teachers with the materials, assessments, training, and support required to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction to every student.



Improving Early Literacy Rates

Nicole Vega, Parent of 2nd Grader, Alexander K. McClure Elementary School

When Aliana started second grade, she loved reading but was struggling with some basic skills. Her teacher, Ms. Rodriguez, gave her extra attention and kept things challenging but also fun.

She stayed in touch with me almost every day, so I could help Aliana at home. Ms. Rodriguez saw me as a partner in my daughter's reading success.

Now, Aliana is already reading at the next grade level. I'm so proud and grateful for the help we got from everyone at her school.

I love reading chapter books with my mom. My favorite right now is *Charlotte's Web*."

—Aliana Vega, 2nd Grader,
Alexander K. McClure
Elementary School



ANCHOR GOAL 3

100% of positions are filled by great principals, teachers, and employees.

Across the city, our principals, teachers, and school staff create safe, supportive, and academically-challenging environments.

Great schools require caring teachers who are masters of their craft, passionate about their profession, and reflect the diversity of their students.

We're committed to ensuring high-quality instruction and organizational expertise by continually improving recruitment and hiring practices for all positions and providing training, professional development, and coaching opportunities for all employees.

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

**NEW
CONTRACTS**

with teachers, principals, and school support staff unions to provide raises, stability, and 21st-century classroom tools.

**ONE OF
FOUR**

teachers hired were educators of color.

99%

of teacher positions filled at the start of the school year.

1,900+

K-3 teachers were trained to be expert reading instructors.

2018 PRIORITIES

Systematically recruit, hire, develop, support, and retain high-quality principals who are ready to lead on day one.

Strengthen the recruitment, hiring, development, and retention of teachers.



Building Instructional Expertise

Jen Grunmeier, 2nd Grade Teacher, Olney Elementary School

As an educator, you're always learning. The Literacy Institute training has been nothing short of transformative.

I was given the knowledge and tools to provide highly differentiated reading and writing instruction. This means every one of my students gets what they need from me to become strong readers.

My kids love it. Guided reading is now their favorite time of the day.

I am really grateful for what the Literacy Institute taught me. I feel like I learned more in that one week than I did in college.



Improving the Lowest Performing Schools

Jason Lytle, Principal, Hartranft Elementary School

My colleagues and I are compelled by a moral imperative to show our students every day how a good education can make all the difference.

For us, this starts with a deep belief that all our students can and will succeed. This growth-mindset approach informs everything we do. We are constantly gathering and applying data to focus our energy where it will make the biggest impact for our students and community.

We've created a single school culture where students and teachers are learning and growing together. I believe every school, every teacher, and every student in our city shares this potential for success.





ANCHOR GOAL 4

100% of funding for great schools is secured with zero deficit.

District-wide financial stability is allowing us to make investments to improve the education our students receive.

Nurses, counselors, new textbooks and hydration stations are in every school. We've modernized computer and science labs and put more resources into our lowest performing schools.

This fiscal stability has been critical in returning Philadelphia's public schools to local control.

A BALANCED BUDGET, YEAR AFTER YEAR



2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

- 4 STRAIGHT YEARS** of balanced budgets resulting in improved long-term credit outlook.
- \$526 MILLION** expansion of the District-wide investment plan over 7 years.
- \$100 MILLION** of taxpayer money saved over the next 20 years through high-interest debt refinancing.
- 70** classrooms modernized with state-of-the-art technology.

2018 PRIORITIES

Invest in the resources, training, professional development, and coaching necessary to create school cultures that enable all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Maintain balanced budgets through the five-year financial plan.



The Philadelphia Inquirer

Philly district spending \$5 million to spruce up classrooms



...the Philadelphia School District unveiled a \$5 million initiative to modernize select classrooms at eight city schools in an effort to boost achievement there." (Aug. 24, 2017)

MOODY'S

Moody's upgrades credit rating for the School District of Philadelphia for the first time since 2010



This type of investment, along with the ratification of a long-awaited teachers' contract, also improves the overall perception of the district as a viable provider of education services to city residents and taxpayers."

Mayor Jim Kenney:

Ensuring quality schools for every Philadelphia child



Over the past two years, the tough reforms that Dr. Hite and his administration have initiated have started to pay dividends. The district has had multiple years of balanced budgets and their bond rating has improved.

Philadelphia's schools have finally returned a nurse and counselor to every school, and the district has filled 99% of teacher vacancies."

*Speech before City Council,
November 2017*





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