

**School District of Philadelphia Budget Hearing 5.4.22
Responses to Councilmembers**

Questions District Team Noted During Hearing:

1. Council requested a list of the ~11,000 outstanding facilities projects by school and Council district.

The District’s maintenance backlog report and executive summary are attached as Exhibit (A). The work orders are organized by the school, councilmanic district, and type of work.

2. Council requested historic data of projected vs. actual enrollment numbers.

Enrollment - Projections v. Actual Summary			
	Projected Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Difference
2014-2015	130,219	129,573	(646)
2015-2016	128,531	131,236	2,705
2016-2017	128,603	128,884	281
2017-2018	128,194	127,376	(818)
2018-2019	127,701	126,078	(1,623)
2019-2020	123,873	123,226	(647)
2020-2021	122,917	118,343	(4,574)
2021-2022	120,909	112,506	(8,403)
Note: Excludes schools that didn't have enrollment projections, which includes Philadelphia Virtual Academy, PLA North, PLA South, Vaux, and Widener			

3. Council requested a Safe Corridors spending and breakdown by school/location.

See Exhibit (B) attached. The breakdown of the number of safe corridor monitors (depending on the scale) will happen after the hiring process is complete.

The schools are as follows: Motivation (5900 Baltimore Avenue), Sayre (5800 Walnut), Roxborough (6498 Ridge Ave), Lincoln (3201 Ryan Avenue), Edison (151 W. Luzerne), Northeast (1601 Cottman), Bartram (2401 S. 67th Street).

The District is additionally working with the Streets Department to support the restructuring of the civilian traffic officers. The new leadership (hiring underway) will actually be embedded in some of our schools. This will enable the District and school leaders to work with them directly on a daily basis and address safety concerns real time.

- Council requested resources dedicated to schools and communities affected by gun violence.

Resources for gun violence vary across different programs in the District. As Council knows, many different services are tied to reducing violence. Specifically, with regard to addressing the trauma students and families are experiencing, the 2022-2023 school year budget includes funding for 60 additional counselors who will be hired to address the trauma students are experiencing. There are also 62 schools with at least one of four Supporting Team for Educational Partnership or *STEP* team members. Additionally, counselors and STEP team members received professional development on therapeutic interventions for trauma, anxiety, and depression to strengthen their skills with identifying the needs of students. Given Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) services exist in each school, students are also referred to IBHS and other mental health providers, such as Network of Neighbors and Lakeside, as needed. In addition, we continue to steadily increase mindfulness programming in the school district.

- What are the total number of elementary, middle and high schools?

The chart below shows the number of schools by grades in the school for each District school. This does not include Charter or Alternative public schools.

School Year	Sector	Grade Span Served	Number of Schools
2021-2022	District	00-08	99
2021-2022	District	09-12	46
2021-2022	District	00-05	33
2021-2022	District	06-08	9
2021-2022	District	00-04	8
2021-2022	District	00-07	4
2021-2022	District	05-08	4
2021-2022	District	05-12	3
2021-2022	District	00-06	2

2021-2022	District	00-12	2
2021-2022	District	06-12	2
2021-2022	District	00-02	1
2021-2022	District	03-05	1
2021-2022	District	07-12	1
2021-2022	District	8	1

6. Council requested the District’s total contract spending and percentage of that spending that goes to WMBE partners.

The District provides updates on its WMBE procurement information every quarter in its Quarterly Managers Report. The most recent report, for the period ended March 31, 2022, can be found on the District's website at <https://www.philasd.org/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/96/2022/05/FY22-Q3-QSMR-w-ADA.pdf>

The WMBE information is found as exhibit SM-6, on page 42 of the document (PDF page 56). Prior Quarterly Reports can be found on the District's Budget Public Information site at <https://www.philasd.org/budget/services/public-information/>

7. How many rising seniors are in danger of not meeting graduation requirements?

Approximately 2,975 rising seniors are off-track in relation to meeting graduation through existing graduation requirements (23.5 credits, 4 years of English, etc.). As we finalize the five pathways, more data is emerging with regard to the percentage of those students who will need to graduate via one of the alternate assessments or evidence-based pathways. Our goal is to have that completed by the end of the school year (June 15, 2022).

8. City Council has requested the average number of counselors per student across High Schools.

Across District High Schools, the average ratio of counselors to students is one counselor for every 269 students.

Questions Sent to District by Council Budget Team (edited for clarity):

1. GESA projects:
 - a. Have those projects come in on time and on budget?

The School District of Philadelphia issued five GESA projects from October 2017 to the present. The first three GESA projects were completed below budget and ahead of schedule, and the other two projects are currently on budget and on schedule.

- GESA Pilot included 3 schools. The construction started on May 25, 2018, and was completed on May 27, 2020, ahead of the original schedule of June 5, 2020. The proposed budget was \$25,188,345, and the final cost of construction was \$22,994,426.77 or \$2,193,918.23 below budget.**
- GESA 1A included 3 schools. The construction started on October 28, 2019, and was completed on May 31, 2021, ahead of the original schedule of June 18, 2021. The proposed budget was \$25,900,000, and the final cost of construction was \$25,340,496 or \$559,504 below budget.**
- GESA 1B included 4 schools. The construction started on November 30, 2020, and was completed on March 10, 2022, ahead of the original schedule of October 31, 2022. The proposed budget was \$22,449,633, and the final cost of construction was \$21,829,261 or \$620,372 under budget.**
- GESA 1C included 1 school. The construction started on January 2, 2022, and is ongoing with expected completion by December 1, 2023. The proposed budget was \$19,444,744.**
- GESA 2 included 3 schools. The construction started on July 2, 2021, and is ongoing with expected completion by October 31, 2023. The proposed budget was \$37,225,000.**
- Currently, the School District is in the process of awarding GESA 3, which includes a minimum of 8 schools, to an ESCO to be completed by September 2024 for a budget of \$105 M.**

b. How does that compare to other types of construction projects the District does in terms of speed and cost?

Although the cost of the GESA project's model is slightly higher than the traditional design-bid-build delivery model, it facilitates higher quality with on-time projects through a single point of accountability, eliminates potential change orders associated with the traditional model, and the schedule is typically about 8 months shorter and requires less coordination between various prime contractors while allowing the least disruptive environment for staff and students. The traditional delivery method requires the District to award a project to the lowest responsible bidder, while the GESA model allows the School District to select contractors based on their qualifications, capacity, approach, and value.

c. What is stopping the District from moving even more GESA projects forward faster?

The availability of qualified contractors, as well as the availability of funds, may prove to be the obstacles to moving more GESA projects forward, faster. To note, the School District has awarded 14 schools under the GESA model from 2017 to date and is preparing to award another 8 schools to an ESCO for a total of 22 schools.

2. Is the District considering using federal funding to pilot solar programs in schools - to potentially reduce energy costs and provide hands-on learning for CTE students who are seeking employment in the clean energy economy?

Yes, the School District of Philadelphia is giving every consideration to available federal and state funding to pilot solar in District schools and the Central Office. Additionally, discussions have taken place with a local union leadership team and the District's executive leadership to explore collaborative opportunities for students who are interested in careers associated with the clean energy economy. During these discussions, participants included top leadership within the school district from the Superintendent's Office and Offices of Operations and Career and Technology.

3. How is the District progressing on its compliance with the Building Energy Performance Policy?

The School District of Philadelphia is working diligently to comply with the City of Philadelphia's Building Energy Performance Policy (BEPP). On May 25, 2022, the Board of Education is scheduled to review, and postured to approve, an Action Item to engage the professional services of Practical Energy Solutions Inc. (PES). PES will support the District's efforts to collect, analyze, and report benchmarking data in compliance with the BEPP. PES is currently providing technical assistance to the City of Philadelphia. The technical assistance and support from PES will mitigate the District's staffing constraints and enable the development of Alternative/High-Performance Pathway Workbooks, as well as timely and accurate reporting requirements in accordance with BEPP Program requirements.

Additionally, the District is pursuing the following initiatives to establish a successful BEPP Program:

- **Hire a qualified Energy Manager for the District's BEPP Program.**
- **Engage an energy consulting firm to assist with: conducting facility audits, reporting requirements, recommending and tracking corrective actions, implementing building tune-ups/High-Performance Compliance, and confirming compliance.**

The City of Philadelphia has verbally committed to granting the District a filing extension.

4. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes significant resources for helping to advance school facilities modernization ...

- a. Can you please share who is tracking and identifying opportunities related to the BIL for the School District?
- b. Do you have a strategic plan for applying for these funds?
- c. How are you planning to engage teachers, union representatives, and students and families as part of this process?
- d. Can you outline all the dollars you've applied for thus far?

The District's Grants offices track and identify all opportunities including those included in the BIL. Details on how to apply for specific programs have yet to be released, but we continue to monitor all opportunities and plan accordingly.

Please see Exhibit (C) attached outlining all competitive grants the District has applied for in the last year.

Please also see Exhibit (D) attached which tracks potential Infrastructure Bill grant opportunities for which the District could possibly apply, but application windows have not yet opened.

5. How is SDP preparing young people, families, and teachers for [climate change related disasters/emergencies], providing updates to families about schools as safe spaces, or working with City leaders to think about the role of schools in helping us build resilient communities?

The District does not have one program for addressing the impacts of climate change which has broad effects on a variety of needs and corresponding services across the school system. Particularly, the framework of the Healing Together Initiative, addressed below in question 6, will serve this function.

6. Healing Together Initiative started in 2021...

a. As students still struggle COVID impacts and rising gun violence, can you provide an update on this initiative?

The areas of focus emphasized through the *Healing Together* initiative have become a permanent part of our regular school programming and operations in school buildings. These areas include: relationships and connection with students and adults; social-emotional learning; adult and student well-being; trauma and mental health services and supports; and, ensuring all are aware of available resources. In each of these areas, we have steadily increased our capacity through additional staff and service to students and staff.

For the 2022-23 school year, we will increase training and district wide information sharing in each of the areas listed above. As well, we will have an additional focus on restorative versus punitive school environments. This professional development series for school-based staff will span the entire school year and is designed specifically as the next phase in the *Healing Together* initiative.

The series is titled, *Supportive Environments*. It represents considerably more professional development about how best to support students' well-being by using critical information and concrete strategies and skills. The series has a focus on student and adult wellness, trauma, mental health and relationships as we continue to heal together.

b. What else are you doing to address the trauma our students are dealing with?

Please refer to Question 4 on page 2.

c. What on-the-ground community groups that do this work are you working with?

We partner with a number of community organizations to support our mental health and trauma needs: Uplift Center For Grieving Children, Network of Neighbors, Antiviolence Partnership, Lakeside, Children's Crisis Treatment Center, Child Guidance Resource Centers, Community Council, CORA Services, Dunbar Community Counseling Services, Elwyn, Family Therapy and Consultation Services, Gemma Services, Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems, Interact, NET Centers, Northern Children's Services, PATH Inc., Philadelphia Mental Health Center, WES Health System.

7. Can you provide an update on the implementation of specialized Tier 1 conflict resolution services that began last year? What percentage of our schools are now utilizing these Tier 1 services?

All of our Tier 1 programming is focused on helping students build and practice the skills and competencies that contribute to conflict resolution. These skills and competencies include: identifying one's own and others' emotions; self-regulating one's emotions under stress; helping others de-escalate or calm down; mediating conflicts; understanding and expressing empathy; recognizing and respecting differences; being aware of one's social environment and building relationships within it; setting and working toward personal goals; and communicating effectively even when emotions are high.

Programming designed to give students the skills needed to responsibly manage conflict and the successful implementation this year include:

- **Relationships First**, a schoolwide restorative justice program. This program served 55 schools (25% of all schools) in 2021-22, and we anticipate that in 2022-23 that number will grown to 82 schools (40% of all schools)
- **Culturally Responsive PBIS**, a schoolwide program focused on engaging students with norms, values, and social-emotional skill building. This program served 104 schools (48% of all schools) in 2021-22 and we anticipate that in 2022-23 that number will grown to 120 schools (55%)
- **Community Meeting**, a daily practice that provides safe space for students and teachers to build strong relationships and discuss what matters most to students at any time. We estimate that 50-60% of schools currently use this practice in some form.
- **Social-emotional learning**, as an ongoing focus throughout the school day. 100% of schools *were offered* professional development in this area this school year. For 2022-23, a year-long focus on social-emotional learning will be provided not only through the *Supportive Environments* professional development series, but also through district-wide academic professional development. This will ensure that all

teachers have the tools and knowledge to support students' social and emotional skill-building throughout the day.

With the ongoing expansion of our offerings, supports, and the considerable expansion of our professional development, we are confident the number of schools implementing these practices and programs will continue to grow.

8. Which community organizations, city departments, and school staff you are working with to ensure that [students] are safe commuting to and from school?

We are working with the PPD, SEPTA, PAAN and Town Watch Integrated. PAAN and TWIST have been primarily used to address conflicts occurring inside schools and before/after school. The Institute for the Development of African-American Youth, Inc (IDAAY), was selected to support the establishment of the Safe Corridors Program.

9. SEPTA is implementing outreach specialists who will monitor SEPTA stops across the city and notify transit police of safety and quality of life issues. Are you working with SEPTA to ensure that these specialists are stationed around popular student stops?

We currently have a partnership with SEPTA. They provide us with reports (including video) related to behavior in the Septa System that needs to be addressed. We are not working with Septa on their deployment of the specialist and they are focused on issues across the entire system. SEPTA is aware of the more popular student stops and deploy accordingly.

10. Has the District considered creating a police science CTE program so students have the necessary skills to join the Explorers program and later the Philadelphia Police Department – to improve diversity of the force and address some of the staffing shortage?

The School District does not have a CTE Police Science program. However, we do have an Emergency Medical Technology/Technician CTE program located at Randolph Technical High School that allows students to serve the community as a member of the Fire Department or a private ambulance company. We have an interest in exploring preparation programs for the Philadelphia Police Department and have met internally with our Office of School Safety to develop a plan to improve the relationship between our students and the police. We believe based on feedback from our students that this needs to happen prior to developing a program.

11. Does the School District have active plans to create and implement new CTE programs over the next 2 years (like the solar program at Frankford HS)? How is the District preparing students for careers in biotech, technology, and healthcare industries as well as directing students to apprenticeship programs, driver's education, and trucking job opportunities?

Starting in the 2022-2023 school year, the School District is conducting an objective, third party, comprehensive evaluation of all of the current CTE programs in the District. The results of the evaluation will be used to identify strengths (which programs and/or aspects of programs are successful); areas for improvement/needs (which programs and/or aspects of programs are not meeting their fullest potential); best practices (what are successful programs doing right); and targeted support to improve struggling programs. This evaluation will also inform the District on which programs/industry areas should be expanded, based on workforce needs.

In addition to comprehensive CTE program evaluation starting in 2022-2023, the School District is phasing in the following new CTE programs: Rehabilitation Aide at South Philadelphia HS; Facility/Property Maintenance at Lincoln HS; and Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources at Lankenau HS.

12. Which elected officials are handling charter school issue of capital dollars for charter schools at the state level?

The per pupil charter school and cyber charter school tuition rate is determined by state formula and is intended to be similar to the amounts the District spent on regular and special education students in the prior fiscal year. The school district pays the same amount for children attending brick and mortar and cyber charter schools. Cyber charter schools receive payments based on the sending school district -- that means they receive up to 500 different tuition rates from the 500 school districts in the commonwealth.

Annually, Governor Wolf -- as part of his budget proposal -- has recommended a statewide cyber charter tuition rate to better reflect the actual costs of educating students virtually. The current proposed rate of \$9,800 per cyber student takes into account the fact that cyber charters do not operate school in brick and mortar building. Under the Governor's proposal, the School District would save about \$31 million.

The School District regularly advocates for a charter and cyber charter funding system that aligns tuition rates with the costs of educating students. Most recently, Board President Wilkerson and Board Member Fix Lopez advocated for the statewide cyber charter tuition rate as part of the Pennsylvania School Board Association's Spring Advocacy Day. Additionally, our Chief Financial Officer Uri Monson testified at a Pennsylvania House Democratic Policy Hearing on the impact current charter school funding systems, including the current cyber charter rate, earlier this spring, have on the District.

The School District regularly voices its support for a statewide cyber charter rate in meetings with the Philadelphia State delegation, General Assembly leadership, and the Wolf administration. Additionally, the Board of Education adopted a resolution in 2020 calling on the General Assembly to adopt common sense charter funding reforms, including the adoption of a statewide cyber charter rate.

13. What is the District’s spending on school Climate Officers?

The District does not have a "Climate Officer" position. Below is a chart of District spending across Climate-related positions.

Climate Positions

	Positions	Cost
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COUNSELOR	48	\$6,427,200
CLIMATE SUPPORT SPECIALIST	87	\$6,142,200
SCHOOL CLIMATE LIAISON	47	\$4,568,400
SCHOOL CLIMATE MANAGER	143	\$19,519,500
SCHOOL COUNSELOR, 10 MONTHS	356	\$47,668,400
STEP CASE MANAGER	43	\$3,801,200
STEP CLINICAL COORDINATOR	62	\$7,607,400
STEP FAMILY PEER	25	\$1,580,000
STEP SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL CONSULT	28	\$2,861,600
Total	839	\$100,175,900

14. Since dismissal for the school district is later than before, can we see a written plan for dismissal that includes safety precautions for students, especially for the fall and winter as it gets dark earlier.

We do not currently have an overarching dismissal plan for all schools. Each school has their individual safety plans tailored specifically to their school. My staff will be working with each of the impacted schools to include in the plans, safety precautions to support the schools dismissal process. Additionally, we will be working with the PPD, Septa and other agencies to develop safety precautions to incorporate into the plans as well.

15. What discipline supports are being offered to students for the upcoming academic year both during school and after school, given the district’s struggles with fair, effective discipline this past year?

Suspensions and all disciplinary actions, in the School District of Philadelphia, have declined significantly in the past ten years. It’s a testament to Dr. Hite’s legacy and commitment to students. In addition, we have reduced the disproportionate discipline data previously existing in the district.

These results were achieved by recognizing and implementing the following:

- **Discipline must be restorative and not punitive; students must know the goal is to change conduct and behavior and not penalize students; we are not supporting a pipeline to prison.**
- **Long term suspensions must be approved by an assistant superintendent, creating a system of accountability.**
- **Healing and harm circles, as well as restorative circles, exist in kindergarten to 12th grades. Research is clear that suspensions do not change behavior.**
- **We help staff understand the root causes of the behavior and tailor interventions and strategies to support the student, be it mental health supports or social service supports.**
- **The Student Code of Conduct is annually reviewed with child advocate stakeholders to include restorative interventions for students who are having behavioral concerns. We include interventions in the code for all 3 MTSS tiers.**
- **As we support the implementation of evidence based universal programming, students in turn feel welcome and supported and respond to that environment in a positive manner.**
- **Our professional development plan for next year is focused on supporting staff with response to student behavior. Understanding why a student behaves the way they do is a key factor in teaching staff how to respond.**

16. Can the district move athletic activities (i.e. games, tournaments, etc.) from the current 3:15pm time to a later time in the day, given the current 3:15pm time is now before the student body dismisses from school, making it impossible for the students to support their teams.

The District will not be able to determine a later start time for games until we can confirm transportation to and from the competition. A collaboration session with charter school ADs and coaches to determine the impact on both school systems is scheduled.

17. Can the district provide a safety plan for athletic events as well, factoring in seasonal changes in the sunset?

As of this date, the athletic events times are not changing. We will be working with the Athletics Department to include safety precautions in the school safety plans for events. Additionally, at many of the athletic events, School Safety Personnel are assigned to ensure a safe environment and supported by the PPD.

18. Are there currently plans to move beyond simply the lottery system announced prior for criteria-based schools?

During the past two months the School District team has conducted focus groups to obtain feedback for this year's school selection process and receive input for the next school selection process. To date, there were two meetings for parents/caregivers of students, kindergarten through 12th grade, that participated in the process. A survey for 8th grade

students and small focus groups for 8th grade parents. We learned a good deal, as well, by hearing from counselors, school leaders, and community members. In general, it is likely: students who make the criteria will again be determined centrally; students who meet the criteria will enter school-specific lotteries to determine which students are given offers to attend; and a wait list will be the list of eligible students who did not receive an offer and not the students school-based staff selected to be on a waitlist. We will not again use the writing sample used this year. We may identify and use another assessment to replace the PSSA.

19. Is there an update on the report about Black Charters?

The report commissioned by the School Board is on track to be released in Fall of 2022.

20. Is there an update on organizations using school district space for free programs, such track and field events and anti-gun violence on district property?

The District is continuing its MOA regarding facilities use by the City for out of school time which is tracked.