



## 2019 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

**The PFT calls on legislators at all levels of government to commit to and prioritize an investment agenda that addresses the deep seated racial and socioeconomic inequity that has disproportionately affected Philadelphia's schoolchildren.**

This legislative platform was developed after surveying PFT members. The following issues have been identified as high priority to Philadelphia's educators.

**Priorities are identified by the applicable area of government:**



City



State



Federal

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### 1. FACILITIES INVESTMENTS

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#### Fund PLANCON

The PLANCON (PA Public School Building Construction and Reconstruction Advisory Committee) completed an assessment of school facilities needs in May of 2018.

Despite an estimated \$5B needed in repairs for Philadelphia schools, the state program that could help subsidize this work is funded at 0%.

Facilities issues in Philadelphia's schools are untenable. Students and educators are exposed to lead, asbestos, mold, and other environmental hazards. Too many classrooms are without heat in the bitter cold and without air-conditioning in heat. PFT is working diligently to document, catalog, and remediate these issues, but ultimately, funding for facilities modernization must be prioritized.



#### School infrastructure legislation

In addition, we need a robust effort and commitment from City and Federal elected officials to increase school infrastructure and facilities investments. All legislative bodies must work together to formulate a strategic plan to ensure facilities funding for our schools.

*LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR EFFORTS: [WWW.PFT.ORG/FIXING-SCHOOL-BUILDINGS/](http://WWW.PFT.ORG/FIXING-SCHOOL-BUILDINGS/)*

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### 2. OVERHAUL TEACHER EVALUATION

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#### Rewrite teacher evaluation law (Act 82)

Act 82, first implemented in 2013-14 is a broken statewide teacher evaluation system that relies on test score data, flawed metrics, and perpetuates a false narrative of "failing" educators and students.

The PFT calls on the legislature to repeal Act 82 and institute a fair evaluation system that takes into account the supports that educators need to thrive.

*MORE INFORMATION ON OUR CONCERNS WITH ACT 82: [tinyurl.com/MMSconcerns](http://tinyurl.com/MMSconcerns)*

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### 3. REFORM CHARTER SCHOOL LAW

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#### Implement commonsense charter oversight mechanisms.

For too long, charter schools have operated under different criteria than traditional public schools. The oversight mechanisms are deeply flawed, and the funding inequities have systematically led to the siphoning of resources from traditional public schools.

The different oversight and funding mechanisms are problematic. For example, charter school educators are exempt from the teacher evaluation system, and up to 25% of their teachers do not have to be certified.

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



#### Issue charter moratorium, increase oversight

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

*PCCY report on the oversight challenges facing Pennsylvania's charter school system: [tinyurl.com/PCCYreport](http://tinyurl.com/PCCYreport)*

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### 4. PROHIBIT THE EXPANSION OF VOUCHERS

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#### Reject EITC/OITC expansion, the creation of ESAs, or any other voucher legislation

No matter the form, vouchers harm public schools. Whether in the form of EITC/OSTC expansion, ESA creation, or any other mechanism, this money is siphoned from traditional public schools without any fiscal, operational, administrative or academic performance accountability or transparency.

Schools receiving EITC funding, despite being paid with tax payer money, may (and do) refuse to enroll, or restrict enrollment of, students for virtually any reason, including religious affiliation, disability, discipline or academic history.

Additionally, Pennsylvania's tax breaks for EITC/OSTC funding are so lucrative that companies can actually EARN money through these "charitable" contributions.

*AFT Report on the negative impacts of ESAs specifically: [tinyurl.com/AFTreportESA](http://tinyurl.com/AFTreportESA)*

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### 5. STANDING UP FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

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#### Reject union busting legislation

We will be monitoring legislation to identify any anti-worker bills that are advancing, and we will vehemently oppose efforts to prevent workers from advocating for better working conditions.

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## 6. FUNDING MECHANISMS

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



### **Tax on the Marcellus Shale**

The IFO projects in 2018-19, a modest 6.5% severance tax would generate \$712 Million in revenue. This would balloon to an estimated \$1.1 Billion in 2022.\* Taxing an industry flush with money simply makes sense.

Schoolchildren across the Commonwealth are constitutionally entitled to a thorough and efficient public education. We urge House and Senate leadership and members to enact the passage of a true severance tax.

*FULL IFO ANALYSIS: [tinyurl.com/IFOshale](http://tinyurl.com/IFOshale)*



### **Restoration of Charter School Line Item**

When the Corbett administration eliminated the Charter School Reimbursement, public schools across the commonwealth lost \$224 million in funding from 2009-2010 alone. Philadelphia's share was \$109 million. Estimates for today balloon to \$300 million in lost revenue for public schools.

*RESEARCH FOR ACTION REPORT ON THE FISCAL IMPACTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: [tinyurl.com/RFAreport](http://tinyurl.com/RFAreport)*



### **Implementation of the Fair Share Tax Plan**

Pennsylvania's schoolchildren should not suffer at the hands of large corporations that are continuing to receive generous tax incentives and exemptions. The PFT is in support of the Fair Share Tax Plan, which Penn Budget and Policy estimates would generate \$2 billion in annual revenue across the commonwealth.

*PBPC INFORMATION ON THE FAIR SHARE TAX PLAN: [tinyurl.com/PBPCfairshare](http://tinyurl.com/PBPCfairshare)*



### **Reevaluate and modify Philadelphia's 10 year tax abatement on new construction**

Over the last several years, a number of proposals regarding modifying tax abatements have been discussed in City Council. We were in support of Councilman Goode's proposal to eliminate the school-district portion of the abatement. Wealthy developers should not be able to continue to profit without paying their fair share. Good Jobs First estimates that Philadelphia schools lose \$61M annually in abatement revenue.

*GOOD JOBS REPORT ON THE ABATEMENT ANALYSIS VISIT: [tinyurl.com/GoodJobsReport](http://tinyurl.com/GoodJobsReport)*

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## ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF PRIORITY FOR THE PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, BASED ON MEMBER SURVEY RESPONSES

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City



State



Federal

*These are items that affect educators and students each day, and are priorities that the PFT will continue to advocate for and work to advance at every legislative level.*

Priority Item	Members Listing Item as a Significant or Top Priority
Addressing school facilities issues	93%
Increasing support personnel in schools	90%
Reduction of class size	88%
Addressing school discipline	88%
Improving access to services for students with special needs	86%
Increasing number of school counselors	82%
Increased funding for and access to the arts	80%
Improving access to services for English Language Learners	79%
Increasing access to social services in schools	78%
Decreasing paperwork mandates	75%
Increasing number of school nurses	71%
Increased access to technology	71%
Increased funding for and access to CTE programs	66%
Redeveloping/modifying curriculum mandates	64%
Increasing number of African American teachers and educators of color	58%
Expanding the community school model	51%