



## Eryn Santamoor for Philadelphia City Council At-Large Education Action Plan

Philadelphia continues to spend less per student than our surrounding suburbs, and this remains one of our most pressing 21st Century civil rights issues. Philadelphia must advocate to Harrisburg for increased investment in our public schools, but city government also has the responsibility to ensure our schools are fully resourced and that our school buildings are inspiring places to learn. That means we must be creative in securing additional resources for the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) – both in terms of hard dollars and through leveraging the city’s many assets. Additionally, as we remain focused on academic achievement and the well-being of our students and families, our approach to education must recognize and respond to the emotional, behavioral, physical, and mental health issues plaguing our children and their families. We must expand in-school support services and further invest in counseling, therapy, casework, and social work if we truly hope to change the trajectory of our children and families’ lives for generations to come.

### **ACTION PLAN**

#### *Funding*

- Adjust the ten-year tax abatement with a goal of increasing funding for our public schools (see Economic Growth section).
- Explore creative resource development mechanisms like PILOTS (Payments-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes) and SILOTS (Services-In-Lieu-of-Taxes) so that our major nonprofits such as hospitals and universities help to enhance the lives of our kids and their families.
- Ensure annual audits of the Pennsylvania Parking Authority (PPA) are completed to make sure every dollar owed to the SDP is paid. Work with the PPA, and our state and local leaders to reduce any and all unnecessary overhead costs that may limit our school funding stream.
- Shift to a higher commercial real estate tax model - rather than a uniform tax rate for commercial properties and homes - to enhance overall real estate tax collection for our public schools, recognizing that this will require advocacy at the state level for a change to the uniformity clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution.
- Eliminate inefficiencies in city government by employing best practices and effective management tools to free up additional resources for our public schools (see City Services section).

#### *Addressing Critical Needs and Gaps*

- Support large-scale financing and partnership options for facility acquisition or development, and desperately needed capital improvements to ensure our schools are safe for students, families, and faculty.
- Identify and secure funding and other incentives to dramatically decrease our teacher vacancy rate.
- Support summer learning opportunities to ensure our students have continued academic and emotional support outside of the academic calendar year.

- Focus on placing an exceptional principal in every school, including support for the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders.

*Emotional and Behavioral Learning*

- Provide additional counseling and case worker services in our schools to support our children and their families more directly. Eryn wants our counselors to provide support to our teachers and the children in their classrooms by taking a teacher-led approach to helping students process their complex emotions and learning differences. If we can do this, we can begin to tackle some of the life challenges our children and families face - issues that get in the way of fostering a successful learning environment. Counselors are trained to help students manage internal and external conflict by supporting their emotional needs, mental health, and personal development. It's time we invest differently in our kids during and after school hours.
- Institute a social and emotional learning curriculum (inclusive of the Counselor Teacher model) in our public schools so we can begin to teach our children many of the life lessons necessary to grow into successful adulthood.

*Efficiency and Accountability*

- In partnership with the District's Family and Community Engagement Office, use the Philly311 model to track requests, needs, and develop a customer-service approach for families and parents interacting with the SDP.