

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 010531)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committee on Education to hold public hearings to investigate whether Edison Schools, Inc., or other privatization efforts, can resolve the financial and education crisis facing the Philadelphia Public Schools and to propose viable recommendations to the City and State Administration that will advance our mandate that we provide quality public education while exploring policies to address the school district's structural deficit and future resource needs.

WHEREAS, The fiscal situation of the Philadelphia School District has reached crisis proportions. This crisis, if left unsolved, in both the short and long term, jeopardizes the future of the more than 210,000 public school children; and

WHEREAS, Edison Schools Inc., the largest for-profit operator of public schools, has been hired by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to do a two month, \$2.7 million evaluation of the School District of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The evaluation may result in a privatized takeover or breakup of the School District, with Edison as the likely entity to manage some or all of the City's schools; and

WHEREAS, Preliminary assessments of Edison's track record in the schools reveal mixed reviews of Edison's performance, with some of its schools showing no academic progress and others showing varying degrees of change. Additionally, many of Edison's educational innovations, such as smaller class size, are not unique to Edison and are well established standards for quality education that have been implemented in several of Philadelphia's finest public schools; and

WHEREAS, News reports have indicated that, while in some schools parents are satisfied with Edison schools, in others, parents have complained that Edison drains the schools of resources and "push out the hardest-to-educate students"; and

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WHEREAS, Edison schools have been involved in reported legal disputes including the termination of their contracts in numerous cities throughout the country because of adverse factors including cost overruns, and high teacher turnover; and

WHEREAS, Despite the obstacles created by a financially strapped school district that serves a largely economically impoverished student body, since 1996 Philadelphia's public school students have continued to demonstrate appreciable improvement in all major content subjects according to school district test results; and

WHEREAS, Public education is a pivotal cornerstone of American Democracy that guarantees free access to a quality and sound education to citizens of all racial, ethnic and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and to those who are mentally and physically challenged; and

WHEREAS, A well informed decision about the fate of our public schools should be based on an impartial and fair evaluation that takes into account all of the educational, social and economic variables that impact on the school district's ability to provide a quality and efficient education, as stipulated by the state constitution; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Committee on Education to hold public hearings to investigate whether Edison Schools, Inc., or other privatization efforts, can solve the financial and educational crisis facing the Philadelphia Public Schools and to propose viable recommendations to the City and State Administration that will advance our mandate that we provide quality public education while exploring policies to address the school district's structural deficit and future resource needs.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution,
Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Miller and Reynolds Brown

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ortiz, Mariano, Longstreth, Tasco, DiCicco,
Clarke, Blackwell, Council President Verna, Rizzo, Kenney,
O'Neill, Nutter, Cohen and Krajewski

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