

# City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260064)

## RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Education to hold hearings on the decrease in Black student enrollment at School District of Philadelphia special admission schools.

WHEREAS, The School District of Philadelphia operates twenty-one special admission or magnet high schools. These high schools are considered to be the best in the City and have their own set of admissions criteria based on academic performance, attendance, and other relevant factors; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, the School District drastically changed the admissions criteria for these and other Citywide schools in the name of equity. The policy change created a Citywide lottery for qualified students and those from select underrepresented zip codes were given preference at Central, Masterman, Academy at Palumbo, Carver High School of Engineering and Science, and Parkway Center City; and

WHEREAS, In 2025, the School District again changed the admissions criteria to only accept select standardized tests, adding a sibling preference, and updating the list of underrepresented zip codes and schools that give those students a preference; and

WHEREAS, Despite the changes to the admissions criteria in the name of equity and inclusion, these elite high schools have seen significant decreases in the enrollment of Black students; and

WHEREAS, According to demographic data from the School District of Philadelphia provided to City Council members on December 8, 2025, following questions asked at the biannual School District hearing in City Council held in the Committee of the Whole on November 18, 2025, fourteen of the twenty-one special admission schools have seen a decrease in Black student enrollment over the last ten years. Of those schools, seven have seen a decrease of at least ten percent and five have seen a decrease of over fifteen percent; and

WHEREAS, Academy at Palumbo and Carver High School of Engineering and Science have seen Black student enrollment drop significantly. In the 2014-2015 school year, Palumbo's

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 260064 continued*

student body was 47.4% Black and Carver's was 76% Black. By the 2024-2025 school year, those numbers had plummeted to 24.5% and 55.7%; and

WHEREAS, Masterman currently has the lowest enrollment of Black students. In the 2024-2025 school year, its student body was 14.3%, a six percent decrease from the 2014-2015 school year; and

WHEREAS, While seven of the special admission schools maintained or grew their Black student populations, the decrease in enrollment demonstrates a disturbing trend requiring significant attention to ensure equitable outcomes for Black students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Education to hold hearings on the decrease in Black student enrollment at School District of Philadelphia special admission schools.

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 260064 continued*

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth day of January, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Thomas for Gilmore Richardson

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Gilmore Richardson, Thomas, Jones, Landau, Lozada, Brooks, Harrity, O'Rourke, Driscoll and Bass