



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 210491

Introduced May 20, 2021

Councilmember Gilmore Richardson

RESOLUTION

Urging support for Pennsylvania House Bills 1204, 1206, 806, and 244 focused on addressing disparities in education, strengthening career and technical education, and creating workforce development opportunities.

WHEREAS, House Bill 1204, introduced by State Representative Regina G. Young, would create the “Governor’s School of Urban Teaching Act” to establish a program to enable future generations of educators to engage in an intensive summer program designed to demonstrate the rewards and hardships of teaching in an urban environment, and would provide educators with exposure to diversity and other societal factors, such as poverty or low parental involvement; and

WHEREAS, According to an article published in the *Sage Journal*, “urban families pay local taxes to fund school districts which often ignore local hiring opportunities in favor of recruiting a predominantly white teaching force from outside the City, thereby reducing the exposure of children of color to teachers who look like them and come from their local neighborhood”; and

WHEREAS, Rep. Young introduced House Bill 1206, which seeks to create a school task force comprised of education and health experts to investigate educational inequities displayed during the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations to address these inequities in our public education and health systems involving the health and safety inside school buildings; and

WHEREAS, A report published by *PBS News Hour* discussed the inequity in school infrastructure exposed by the spread of COVID-19 and the “crisis of crumbling and dilapidated school buildings brought on by decades of underfunding and neglect. The consequences are especially dire for Black and Latino children and for low-income children of all races. Schools serving these students were much more likely to remain closed this fall, in part because old buildings were deemed unsafe for both children and teachers during the pandemic. The fallout has left families scrambling for childcare and students struggling to keep up with remote learning”; and

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WHEREAS, House Bill 806, introduced by State Representative Ciresi and co-sponsored by Rep. Young, would establish an education reform commission with a focus on workforce development to conduct a comprehensive study and make concrete recommendations on construction and renovation needs, educational offerings and curriculum, equipment and staffing needs, extracurricular options, career and technical education, cost savings opportunities, fair school board elections, adequate and equitable school funding, and equal access to education for all students; and

WHEREAS, The *Philadelphia Business Journal* highlighted the need for workforce development and "...a strategy that connects the displaced retail worker to jobs we may not know the name of yet or job sectors that are experiencing shortages now"; and

WHEREAS, Rep. Young also introduced House Bill 244, which will address the anguish and frustration parents and students feel when a school suddenly shuts its doors by creating a clear process for administrators to follow when closing a school building due to financial, enrollment, or other reasons to require the school notify parents and provide them with guidance to enroll their children in nearby schools; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, addressed the serious inequities and consequences of sudden school closures. "School closures carry high social and economic costs for people across communities. Their impact however is particularly severe for the most vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls and their families. The resulting disruptions exacerbate already existing disparities within the education system but also in other aspects of their lives"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby urge support for Pennsylvania House Bills 1204, 1206, 806, and 244 focused on addressing disparities in education, strengthening career and technical education, and creating workforce development opportunities.