

Legislation Text

File #: 240028, Version: 0

Authorizing the Committee on Education to hold hearings concerning the practice of “leveling” and its impact on students and teachers in the School District of Philadelphia, especially following the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant learning loss among young people in the School District of Philadelphia. According to the School District of Philadelphia’s scorecard, 34% of students in grades 3-8 met state standards for English last year, a 2% decrease from 2018-19. Math outcomes were worse with only 17% of students meeting the proficiency standard in 2021-22, down from 22% in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, Student attendance saw a staggering decline with only 37% of students attending at least 95% of instructional days in 2021-22, and 20% of students attending fewer than 80% of instructional days. This is a 10% percent difference in both categories from 2018-2019; and

WHEREAS, In early October, the School District of Philadelphia announced enrollment-driven resource review or “leveling” which disrupts classroom instruction and forces school communities to grapple with major changes on very short notice; and

WHEREAS, Leveling requires teachers to move to new positions with only a week of notice and results in some classes doubling in size overnight, requiring twice the effort from instructors who remain to manage these considerably larger classes; and

WHEREAS, Leveling occurs after the school year has already begun, requiring educators to retool their lesson plans to accommodate the needs of new students on short notice or move to entirely different school communities, fully disrupting their daily lives; and

WHEREAS, Leveling actively interrupts the relationships teachers have developed with their students, leading to decreased student engagement in classrooms, and it takes away the opportunity for one-on-one instruction for classes that see significant increases in size; and

WHEREAS, Smaller class sizes should be a priority for the District as we work together to address COVID-19 pandemic related learning loss and student attendance, and the practice of leveling does not allow for classrooms to be built around the needs of individual students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Committee on Education to hold hearings concerning the practice of “leveling” and its impact on students and teachers in the School District of Philadelphia, especially following the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.