



City of Philadelphia

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

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the life and legacy of Baba Joe Foster, a community leader in the movement for African-centered education in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Baba Joseph Foster stands out as the foremost educator in the city, having made groundbreaking contributions to the establishment of African-centered educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, during the 38-day strike by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Baba Joe Foster taught large classrooms of youth for free. This experience inspired the opening of Harambee Institute by John Skief and Foster; and

WHEREAS, With Harambee's success, in 1997 Harambee Institute School of Science and Technology applied for and received a charter to operate the first public African Centered Charter School in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Foster served on the founding board and was the President of the board for four years; and

WHEREAS, After his years of dedication to Harambee, Foster founded the "Songhai Empire" with M. Christine Thomas Wiggins. This was a middle school program that was implemented and was a model for teaching history and culture while incorporating student empowerment; and

WHEREAS, After joining the staff at Imhotep Institute Charter High School, he was named the principal in 2003. Foster served as principal for nine years before he retired. During his tenure at Imhotep, he taught mathematics, coached girls' basketball, served as a mentor, and supported upcoming African-centered educators and leaders within the community; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, while principal of Imhotep, Baba Joe joined the founding coalition of Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School and served on the school board from 2015 until 2016. Until Baba Joe passed, he continued to serve all three of the remaining African-Centered public schools in the city and was a part of the Association of African-Centered Schools. Over his career, no matter the institution, he was consistent, vigilant, and generous; and

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor the life and legacy of educator and leader Baba Joe Foster and recognize the impact he had on African Centered Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to the family of Joe Foster, further evidencing the sincere respect, admiration and condolences of this legislative body.