

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the City Council Committees on Children & Youth and Education to hold public hearings on the search and hiring process for the next Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, and the role that the perspectives of families, students, teachers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, support staff, and community members must play throughout the search process.

WHEREAS, School communities-students, parents, caregivers, teachers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, support staff, and community members-are the lifeblood of the School District of Philadelphia. Their perspectives on in-school conditions and on-the-ground realities of daily school operations are our most valuable insight in understanding how the School District should be led and should grow; and

WHEREAS, Fully understanding the challenges that the School District faces, and the opportunities to prioritize equity and improve communication, depends on the perspectives and expertise of school communities. These voices have restored nurses and counselors in every public school, limited high-stakes testing, centered mental health and trauma as top investment priorities, and won new facilities and renovations to school buildings; and

WHEREAS, Racial inequities have persisted and deepened in various ways over the last decade, impacting the City's most vulnerable communities. From mass school closings a decade ago to toxic building conditions today; from the dwindling of Black educators and bilingual professionals to the lack of mental health and trauma supports for youth and communities experiencing gun violence; from the opioid epidemic to the COVID-19 pandemic: Black, immigrant, low-income, and disability communities around the City have borne the brunt of the School District's challenges, and must play a leading role in shaping the criteria for the next superintendent and be engaged through all stages of the search and hiring process. The past experiences of school communities with the School District provide an unparalleled expertise that must ground any search for new District leadership; and

WHEREAS, City Council plays a vital role in reinforcing the District's responsibility to publicly engage residents in meaningful conversation about the vision and direction of their schools. These hearings will help expand the District's reach across the City and ensure that the search process is inclusive and expansive; and

WHEREAS, The School District's ability to carry out a vision of adequate education hinges on the trust of school communities. Rebuilding that trust begins with a public process that centers the voices of those at the heart of what makes Philadelphia schools so vibrant and so tenacious; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes the Committees on Children & Youth and Education hold public hearings on the search and hiring process for the next Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, and the role that the perspectives of families, students, teachers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, support staff, and community members must play throughout the search process.

