

Legislation Text

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Recognizing May as Teacher Appreciation Month, May 6 through 10 as Teacher Appreciation Week, and May 7th as Teacher Appreciation Day in the City of Philadelphia, and honoring teachers across the City for their vital work to uplift, care for and educate young people.

WHEREAS, Teaching continues to be the profession with the greatest holistic impact on young people, families, and the future of Philadelphia. Every Philadelphian has a favorite teacher who touched their life in a meaningful way, and it is the goal of City Council to ensure every young person has that privilege; and

WHEREAS, May is National Teacher Appreciation Month in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, an occasion to celebrate the people who educate our community. Teachers are the foundation of society, preparing generation after generation for the modern world and constantly shifting economy; and

WHEREAS, Across Philadelphia, thousands of teachers spend each day working incredibly hard to reach, teach and nurture students and minds to improve the overall state of our City and the abilities of our residents; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 1 in 3 teachers across Philadelphia schools chose to leave the profession between 2021 and 2022. In an environment with substantial teacher shortages and unbalanced student-to-teacher ratios, the turnover has hit schools and teachers hard. Teachers have had to cope with unsustainable conditions for years, and the pandemic has only exacerbated the situation; and

WHEREAS, Total student enrollment across all Philadelphia schools is now over 197,000 students, while the total number of teachers is roughly 12,000, with an average student-teacher ratio of roughly 17:1 - a rate that is worse than comparable cities, as well as the national and Pennsylvania averages; and

WHEREAS, These numbers put exponentially more stress on every teacher, and contribute to the troubling trend of teachers leaving the profession. Experts estimate it costs Philadelphia schools \$27,000 for each teacher who leaves; and

WHEREAS, Ongoing gaps in equitable treatment of students can only be addressed through equitable treatment and hiring practices for teachers. Underpaying teachers and under-hiring or training for a diverse pool of teacher applicants directly contributes to the equity gap between students; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is engaged in determining a school budget, a Community College of Philadelphia budget, and will soon face fiscal challenges for schools that could exacerbate existing challenges. Teachers from every education age range are calling for better pay, hours, and working conditions; and

WHEREAS, Deep investment in teachers and teaching promotes socioeconomic equity, neighborhood wealth-building, and good-paying jobs that go to local residents. It helps young people achieve their dreams, and improves every outlook of our City; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes May as Teacher Appreciation Month, May 6 through 10 as Teacher Appreciation Week, and May 7th as Teacher Appreciation Day in the City of Philadelphia, and honors teachers across the City for their vital work to uplift, care for and educate young people.