

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Children and Youth to conduct hearings to investigate the status of children in Philadelphia during and post-COVID-19.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is home to over 343,000 children under the age of 18, the impact of COVID-19 on such a large population of children has included, for many, obstacles such as food insecurity, unsafe living conditions, increased exposure to gun violence, amongst other difficulties; and

WHEREAS, For children already living with poverty, health problems, and special needs - the pandemic has swept them further toward the edge and the upheaval has caused safety nets for the city's most vulnerable children to lessen or disappear altogether, meanwhile parents are left to straddle those gaps with little money; and

WHEREAS, By the end of March 2020, Philadelphia reached over 1,300 COVID-19 cases, sparking the School District of Philadelphia to announce the closure of all public schools in efforts to alleviate the spread of COVID-19. This closure was met with a transition to digital learning for the rest of the academic year; and

WHEREAS, In light of the new remote learning atmosphere, the School District of Philadelphia provided student learning guides, laptop rentals, and district-wide meal distribution sites. Families of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch received a food benefit amount of \$365 for each school-aged child in their family; and

WHEREAS, Under the circumstances, parents have been forced to engage in teaching their children at home, while juggling work and childcare. Philadelphia students are faced with the struggles of adjusting to remote learning environments, as well as social isolation. These challenges may precede, as William R. Hite, Superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia, announced the 2020-2021 school year may include in-person learning, digital learning, or a hybrid learning model; and

WHEREAS, Minority communities in Philadelphia have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. A report from the CDC shows that COVID-19 is negatively affecting Black Americans more than any other racial group. There exists a high correlation between poverty and race/ethnicity; decades of systemic poverty and racism leave black Americans more susceptible to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, The leadership of the City of Philadelphia needs to take an inventory on the damage cause by COVID-19 to our children and to restore and ensure the continued wellbeing of children in Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Children and Youth to conduct hearings to investigate the status of children in Philadelphia during and post-COVID-19.