

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf on the 200th Anniversary of its founding.

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (“PSD”), the third school of its kind in the United States, was founded in 1820, when the Philadelphia-based crockery maker & dealer David G. Seixas, concerned with the plight of impoverished Deaf children he observed on the city’s streets, began providing them with assistance and instruction in his private home on High Street (now Market Street) west of 16th Street; and

WHEREAS, About a year later, in desperate need of additional space to accommodate students, PSD relocated to a rented office space on the southeast corner of 11th & High Streets; and

WHEREAS, Also in 1821, the renowned Deaf Frenchman Laurent Clerc, a cofounder of the nation’s first school for the deaf, the American School for the Deaf, in Hartford, Connecticut, was hired as PSD’s second principal; and

WHEREAS, In 1825, PSD moved into its first “official” school building, located at Broad and Pine Streets, currently known as the University of the Arts’ Dorrance Hamilton Hall, where the institution would remain for nearly seven decades before expanding yet again; and

WHEREAS, In 1892, PSD moved onto a spacious 33-acre property in Mt. Airy, upon which fourteen buildings were constructed to accommodate all students, staff, and school activities, and where they would stay for 92 years, until declining enrollment and related economic factors prompted another relocation; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, PSD purchased its current home at 100 West School House Lane, the site of the Old Germantown Academy, which has a unique historical character dating back to the Revolutionary Era, and where they have continued their tradition of excellence in Deaf Education; and

WHEREAS, After two centuries of educating and empowering Deaf children to succeed and thrive, PSD continues to recognize and develop students’ individual strengths, build their confidence, and collaborate with families and communities to maintain a nurturing, dynamic, and language-rich environment steeped in mutual respect, shared dignity, and cultural awareness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf on the 200th Anniversary of its founding.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf as a sincere expression of City Council’s gratitude, appreciation, and commendation, especially for their commitment to Deaf Education and their legacy as leaders in that field.