

## Legislation Text

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Honoring and congratulating students, educators, staff and families of the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School for their selection as a National Blue Ribbon School by the Department of Education, a significant and well-deserved honor, and affirming their hard work to create a vibrant, inclusive, and academically rigorous school built upon on the pursuit of social justice and the arts.

WHEREAS, The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School, a public high school in Northeast Philadelphia, is a place where young people can be themselves and a school where students receive an education imbued with the belief that the arts are an opportunity for intellectual growth, personal creativity, and a commitment to social justice; and

WHEREAS, The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush was selected as a National Blue Ribbon School, a prestigious distinction awarded by the United States Department of Education in recognition of a school's overall academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps; and

WHEREAS, Students at the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush have many avenues to develop and excel in the arts, expressing their creativity and passion through such means as conceiving and organizing plays, visual arts exhibits, instrumental and vocal concerts, musicals, choreographed dances, and cultural festivals, among many other creative pursuits; and

WHEREAS, Graduates of the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush have not only found success in the arts but also in fields like medicine, social sciences, psychology and design; a testament to the school's emphasis on the process of creativity within the academic sphere and belief that graduates of the Arts Academy are capable of innovation in all fields; and

WHEREAS, The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush encourages students to become positive leaders, placing heavy emphasis on student voice and ownership, as demonstrated by the many student-founded and led student-interest clubs and the powerful anti-racism organizing that has taken place at the school; and

WHEREAS, At the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush, the social and emotional wellbeing of students is emphasized and valued, exemplified by the "Relationships First" initiative, where students take the lead to build community and talk frankly and supportively about mental health; and

WHEREAS, The pursuit of social justice runs through all aspects of the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush; students have advocated for the English Department to include more Latino and Asian literature, inspiring the school to change its curriculum, run a Gender and Sexuality Alliance, as well as a committed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, hosted an open mike for LGBTQ+ acceptance, created performances to educate their community on African American History, lead an annual social justice day that focuses on education and celebration, and have organized and mobilized against discrimination; and

WHEREAS, The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush encourages the best in our young people; creativity, community, a commitment to a more just world, and intellectual curiosity, creating graduates with the grace,

passion, and skills to better our City and society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors and congratulates students, educators, staff and families of the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School for their selection as a National Blue Ribbon School by the Department of Education, a significant and well-deserved honor, and affirming their hard work to create a vibrant, inclusive, and academically rigorous school built upon on the pursuit of social justice and the arts.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School as an expression of the admiration and respect of this legislative body.