

DRAFT

Youth United for Change
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Criteria for Successful Public High Schools in Philadelphia

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Introduction

Youth United for Change (YUC) is an organization for Philadelphia public high school students to advocate for ourselves and a stronger education. We have chapters at four Philadelphia neighborhood high schools: Kensington, Edison, Olney and Strawberry Mansion. We have over 100 members and represent over 7,000 students and we are growing.

We developed a Educational Plan for Philadelphia High Schools because we know what it is like to go to school every day. We also know what we need to make the schools stronger and the Governor and Edison Schools Inc. have left out some very important points in their plans that are necessary for us to get a good education.

All of the areas listed below must be included in a plan in order for us to succeed. Our education is the most important thing to us right now in our lives to help us get to college, get a good job, or continue our education. Education is a right not a privilege!

Teaching and Learning

1. Multi-cultural curriculum for all subject areas, in particular, James Banks' Decision-Making and Social Action Approach to curriculum;
2. Creative hands on teaching methods;
3. Textbooks that reflect our class work;
4. Student – teacher relationships as an essential part of teaching and learning;
5. Educational field trips;
6. Vocational-education classes that integrate shops with other content areas;
7. Use of technology in lesson plans;

8. Math and English class size 1:20 teacher to student ratio and all other subjects 1:25 teacher to student ratio;
9. Teaching Assistants in each class;
10. Staff development, training and ongoing support for teachers.

Libraries: The library should be the information center of the high school and have:

1. Qualified Librarians;
2. Librarians at all instructional meetings with teachers;
3. Updated books that reflect the multi-cultural needs of the student body;
4. Open during all schools hours and at least two days after school;
5. Fully stocked computer labs with Internet access;
6. Used as a resource by all teachers to enhance teaching and learning.

Technology

1. A Technology Plan for every school developed with student input;
2. 1:4 computer to student ratio; one computer for every four students;
3. Full-time Technology Coordinator in every school;
4. Student-access to computer labs during and after school;
5. Technology integrated curriculum (lesson plans that include the use of technology);
6. Staff development on integrating technology in the classroom and teacher support;
7. Conference Technology in every school.

Guidance Counselors

1. 1:250 counselor to student ratio; in other words, one counselor per 250 students;
2. One-on-one meetings with every student;
3. Give out necessary college information starting in 9th grade;
4. Counselors develop a course and career plan with every ninth grader;
5. College access centers in every school that are open all day and after school.

After School Programs

1. Homework help room that is open after school Monday – Thursday;
2. SAT prep courses;
3. Students from all schools having access to the same sports;
4. After school clubs that include drama, dance, music and singing.

Security and Climate

1. More NTA's and more training for NTA's;
2. Adults setting the tone for respect in the school;
3. Fights in school should be handled appropriately;
4. Understanding of both cultural and economic background of the students;
5. Peer mediation and conflict resolution programs.

Accountability and Management

1. No private corporations managing the school district or individual schools;
2. Permanent, long-term principals for each high school with incentives to stay at one school for at least 3-5 years and a salary comparable to suburban salaries;
3. Meaningful parent and students decision-making at school and district-wide level, in particular on school policy and financial issues;
4. Parents and students should be a part of any plans the government makes concerning education;
5. Programs that understand the needs of our parents and effective ways of including them in our education rather than blaming them for not getting involved;
6. More parent teacher conferences;
7. An accountability session once a year with parent and students and all public and school officials;
8. Accountability at the school level that includes parents and students.

Facilities: School buildings are our learning environment. Every facility should have the following:

1. Clean and presentable bathrooms with toilet paper and soap;
2. Painted walls;
3. Murals;
4. Clean and presentable classrooms;
5. More desks;
6. Functional PA systems;
7. Functional phone systems;
8. Functional locks;
9. Functional windows;
10. Functional clocks / bell systems;
11. Healthy food in the lunchroom;
12. Auditoriums with proper seating and sound systems;
13. Classrooms for every teacher.

Money

1. \$13,000 per pupil, or comparable to suburban spending;
2. Pay increases for teachers comparable to suburban pay;
3. Pay increases for Principals comparable to suburban pay;
4. An equitable funding formula.