

For more information, contact  
Daniel Schiff, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Planning [dschiff@philaedfund.org](mailto:dschiff@philaedfund.org)

# Philadelphia Education Fund

## Education First Compact

*September 2016 – June 2017*

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The Education First Compact is a monthly policy speaker series hosted by the Philadelphia Education Fund focusing on important education policy issues in the city of Philadelphia. It features presentations by major education stakeholders with the opportunity for member participation, advocacy, and discussion.

The Compact meetings are a forum for informing a wide range of stakeholders, launching collective impact efforts, receiving feedback, and engaging in constructive dialogue. The Education First Compact is the most significant and collaborative forum of its kind addressing education issues in our city.

Leaders from every facet of education participate in the Education First Compact: the School District of Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Education, non-profit organizations, policy makers, education advocates, community members, teachers, researchers, businesses and corporations, funders, universities, and more.

*Meeting topics and speakers for the 2016-17 school year are as follows:*

### **September - Back to School with Dr. Hite**

It's September again and the 2016-17 school year is starting soon. What does the landscape for public education look like in Philadelphia? What are the School District's goals, strategies, and anticipated challenges? Come hear the Superintendent speak and share your questions and thoughts as a member of the community.

Presented by: Superintendent William J. Hite, School District of Philadelphia

### **October - Keeping Kids Safe and in School: School Climate, Discipline, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

**October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Bullying is just one facet of a school's climate - the interpersonal relations between students and adults, rates of student attendance and dropout, student discipline, and even violence. What actions can be taken to improve the climate and culture of schools? How can staff use restorative justice practices to decrease suspensions and conflict? What role do police and courts have to play in combating the school-to-prison pipeline? In October's Compact, we explore Philadelphia's approach to improving school safety, climate, and discipline with School District leaders and a former Deputy Police Commissioner.**

Presented by:

Rachel Holzman, Deputy Chief, Student Rights and Responsibilities, School District of Philadelphia

Jody Greenblatt, Deputy, School Climate and Safety, School District of Philadelphia

Kevin J. Bethel, Philadelphia Deputy Police Commissioner (Retired); Stoneleigh Foundation Fellow

## **November - Building Upon 9th Grade as the Foundation for College and Career Readiness**

Ninth grade is a critical year for students. School gets tougher, the stakes are higher, and life after high school looms large. Philadelphia schools are organizing around the principle that supporting students early in high school can help them to persist, graduate, and successfully transition to a postsecondary option - college or career.

At November's Compact, we discuss how Ninth Grade Academies, community partnerships, Career and Technical Education, and targeted support from counselors, educators, and administrators can align to strengthen postsecondary support and planning across neighborhood - and all - high schools.

Presented by:

Dr. Fred McDowell, Deputy Chief, College and Career Readiness, School District of Philadelphia

Ali Robinson-Rogers, Executive Director, College and Career Readiness, School District of Philadelphia

Fateama Fulmore, Executive Director, High Schools, School District of Philadelphia

## **December - Philadelphia's Push for Pre-K**

Early childhood education has gained increased attention in recent years thanks to efforts like Pre-K for PA and the support of Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. Advocates and researchers argue that pre-K is the new first grade - a critical investment that predicts future academic and life outcomes and generates \$3 to \$16 in savings and growth for every dollar invested. Universal pre-K has even made it onto the national agenda, and Philadelphia has just announced plans to add 2,000 new high-quality pre-K seats at 78 sites through its new PHLpreK initiative.

At December's Compact, we'll hear about Philadelphia's push for pre-K and discuss some key questions: How can we ensure that new seats are of high quality, and located in the areas that need them most? How can pre-K providers collaborate with Philadelphia's teachers, share best practices across programs, and align work with elementary schools? Philadelphia's Chief

Education Officer and a panel of expert pre-K providers, authorizers, and advocates will answer these questions and more.

Presented by: Otis Hackney, Chief Education Officer, City of Philadelphia

Panelists:

Donna Cooper, Executive Director, Public Citizens for Children and Youth

Lola Rooney, Director, Early Childhood Education and School Age Child Care, YMCA of Philadelphia

Tyrone Scott, Director of External Affairs, Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children

## **January - It Takes a Village: Families and Communities as Equal Partners**

Schools are often the heart of communities. It's no surprise then that Philadelphia's families have been fighting to preserve and improve educational options for children for decades. Meanwhile, hundreds of community partners in Philadelphia have found ways to support students through schools, and schools have been working in turn to embrace this support.

With community and family engagement more important than ever, structures like Friends-of-groups and School Advisory Councils (SACs) have taken on an increased role - engaging parents, coordinating communities, and collaborating with school leadership to make key decisions.

At January's Compact, we'll hear from education advocates working to inform and empower families, caretakers, and community members. We'll also learn about the new policies and structures the School District's Family and Community Engagement Office (FACE) is putting in place to increase information, access, and decision making.

How can schools best collaborate with families and community partners? What structures are needed to support community engagement at individual schools and city-wide? What might equity and decision-making look like across diverse school settings?

Presented by:

Jenna Monley, Executive Director, Office of Family and Community Engagement, School District of Philadelphia

Jeff Hornstein, Chair, Philadelphia Crosstown Coalition Education Committee (convener of Friends Of Neighborhood Education)

Sylvia Simms, Founder/President, "PARENT POWER" What Will You Do With Yours?

## **February - What the "Every Student Succeeds Act" Means for Philadelphia**

Federal education policy can seem far removed from day-to-day schooling, but the possibilities and implications of the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are significant. ESSA, which takes

full effect in the 2017-18 school year, is the first re-authorization of the country's primary K-12 education policy since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

While the details are still being worked out, some major trends are clear. ESSA shifts more control back to states and districts from the federal government, with implications for accountability, teacher evaluation, school choice, the Common Core standards, school improvement, funding, testing, transparency, and more. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is tasked with applying the flexibility in these new regulations to the state's comprehensive plan. Meanwhile, the incoming federal administration has not yet formalized its education philosophy, funding, and regulatory approach towards the states.

Given these conditions, what can Pennsylvania do to innovate and take advantage of flexibility to support Philadelphians and all Pennsylvanians? Does the new federal administration signal major changes to ESSA implementation, or will increased local control insulate states from federal influence? How can we move forward our priorities under this new and uncertain policy while anticipating unintended consequences?

Pennsylvania's Department of Education wants to hear from you. Come to learn and share your thoughts and questions.

Presented by:

Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education

Beth Olanoff, Special Assistant to the Secretary and ESSA Lead, Pennsylvania Department of Education

## **March - Bridging the Teacher Diversity Gap**

In Philadelphia, 85% percent of students are non-white, but teachers of color make up only 30% of the teaching force. The difference between the large number of non-white students and small number of non-white teachers is called the "teacher diversity gap." And by some accounts, this gap has grown larger in the last 10 years, with more Hispanic students entering schools while the percentage of black teachers has dropped significantly. What's more, a mere 400 teachers, or 5% of Philadelphia's teachers are black men.

Why is teacher diversity important? Research shows that teacher-student similarity can lead to positive personal and academic outcomes, as teachers of color serve as community role models and in leadership roles. Black teachers are also more likely to believe black students will find postsecondary success, and black students are three times as likely to be identified as gifted by black teachers.

This March, we'll hear from a leading researcher of teacher recruitment and retention, a policymaker who is setting the school district's vision on teacher diversity, and an educator and

activist looking to triple the number of black male teachers in the city. Where does the Philadelphia stand now in terms teacher diversity strategies and priorities? As a city, where do we need to focus our efforts to ensure better teaching conditions and a stronger pipeline?

Presented by:

Dr. Richard Ingersoll, Professor of Education and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania,  
Graduate School of Education

Louis Bellardine, Chief Talent Officer, School District of Philadelphia

Sharif El-Mekki, Founder, The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice

### **April - Writing is Reading: Getting Started on the Road to Literacy**

Literacy is the doorway to learning. It empowers young learners to navigate a complex world, inspires them to pursue their passions, and prepares students for higher-level academics. Yet, two out of three Philadelphia school children cannot read at grade level by the time they enter fourth grade. The School District of Philadelphia, working with a broad range of community partners through the Read by 4th Campaign and the Mayor's Office, aims to double the number of fourth graders reading at grade level by 2020. Ample research suggests that when children write, their reading also improves.

This April, we'll have the opportunity to see how two Philadelphia schools are using an evidence-based writing program to enhance literacy for all of their kindergarten and first-grade students, including young English learners. The School District of Philadelphia's Comprehensive Literacy Framework (Pre-K to 5) defines specific grade level goals for our youngest learners in both writing and reading and the panelists will provide a look at how the program works as part of this Framework. They will facilitate a discussion about how parents, teachers, and community members can work together to implement strong literacy programs for our youngest learners. What does it take to translate policy goals into a school context for student success? How are reading and writing related? How can we support writing for all learners?

Presented by:

Dr. Diane Waff, Practice Professor of Education and Director, Philadelphia Writing  
Project, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

Doria Mitchell, Director, K-3 Early Literacy and Special Projects, School District of  
Philadelphia

Awilda Balbuena, Principal, Philip H. Sheridan Elementary

Angela Burke Beaumont, Teacher, Frances E. Willard Elementary

### **May - The Fiscal Future of Philadelphia's Schools**

School budgeting is a complicated interplay between local, state, and federal budgets. Four years ago, due to state and federal cuts, the "Doomsday Budget" hit Philadelphia, radically changing the

landscape for students, teachers, administrators, and schools. Since then, the School District of Philadelphia has begun a gradual process of restoration and reinvestment, though state-level funding has still not recovered. And while the District has begun making investments of over \$500 million over the next six years, the next "Doomsday Budget" may be just around the corner.

This May, we'll hear from the District's Chief Financial Officer on what the next five years holds for Philadelphia's finances and schools. Philadelphia remains the only school district in Pennsylvania that does not have the authority to raise revenues, while legally mandated expenditures continue to grow. Meanwhile - school facilities, a teacher contract, arts, counseling supports, and much more - the list of needs is substantial. In this context, what kinds of investments can the District make? What can Philadelphia and Pennsylvania do to keep afloat for the next few years, and what risks threaten that? Ultimately, what would be needed to fix the District's structural deficit and create a truly adequate level of investment in the lives of young Philadelphians?

Presented by: Uri Monson, Chief Financial Officer, School District of Philadelphia

## **June - Community Schools: A Year in Review**

In 2016, the City of Philadelphia launched a new Community Schools Initiative in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia. Mayor Kenney's Office of Education and Community Schools Office have proposed creating 25 community schools over 5 years, funded by a new sugary-beverages tax for a total \$40 million. Community schools are a model in which social, health, expanded learning, youth, and family engagement, and other services are embedded into schools. This model, taking hold nationally, seek to turn schools into hubs for community growth and wellbeing.

One year later, 9 of those 25 schools are on their way. Community School Coordinators have spent the year acquiring and considering feedback from schools, families, community partners, and government agencies. In March, action plans were released for all 9 schools. So how does the Community Schools Initiative hope to transform schools, given the unique capacities and needs of each community? What have been the successes - and challenges - of the first year? The Community Schools Office is joining us for the last Compact of the 2016-17 school year to report out on Year 1.

Presented by: Susan Gobreski, Director for Community Schools, Mayor's Office of Education