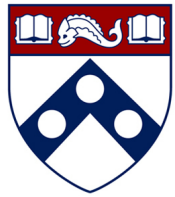


CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

Penn pledges \$100 million to the School District of Philadelphia



Penn
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann (<https://president.upenn.edu/meet-president>), Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, School Board President Joyce Wilkerson, and Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia William R. Hite Jr., today announced that Penn will contribute \$100 million to the School District of Philadelphia (<https://www.philasd.org/>), representing an unprecedented commitment to the City and its public schoolchildren. This is the largest private contribution to the School District in its history.

Penn’s \$100 million contribution to the School District—\$10 million annually for 10 years—will be used to remediate environmental hazards, including asbestos and lead, in our public school buildings. This funding will have an immediate impact, supplementing the ongoing efforts of the City and District, and enabling them to dramatically accelerate and expand their response to environmental concerns in our public schools. “Nothing is more important than the health and welfare of our children, and few things are more crucial to a community than the safety and quality of its public schools,” said President Gutmann. “When Philadelphia’s schools and schoolchildren succeed, all Philadelphia succeeds. We are proud to be able to partner with our City and School District to significantly improve the learning environment for Philadelphia’s schoolchildren in a way that will have a long-lasting impact on the health, safety, and wellbeing of our entire City. This historic commitment by the University and Penn Medicine (<https://www.med.upenn.edu>) will help support a most critical and immediate need that will benefit generations of Philadelphia students, their teachers, and school staff.”

“All Philadelphia students deserve high quality and safe learning environments, but we know that achieving this systemwide in our aging school buildings requires significant resources,” said Mayor Jim Kenney. “I commend the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Amy Gutmann for this historic gift. It will go a long way in accelerating the District’s aggressive environmental remediation work. I also hope it will inspire other institutions to follow Penn’s lead. It takes all of us working together—government, business, nonprofit, and philanthropy—to tackle our most pressing challenges and ensure our kids have access to great schools in every neighborhood.”

Mayor Kenney, Superintendent Hite, and the Board of Education have embarked on aggressive environmental remediation efforts in School District buildings. The School District currently has an estimated \$4.5 billion in unmet capital needs. Since 2018, the School District has fully stabilized lead paint in 54 elementary schools, completed work to certify an additional 25 schools as Lead Safe, and invested more than \$23 million to complete asbestos-related projects. The District announced in November 2019 an Environmental Safety Improvement Plan that outlined new safety and inspection measures. The District approved \$41 million in January 2020 for asbestos testing, abatement, project management, and other remediation resources.

“Every student in Philadelphia deserves the dignity of a safe and welcoming school building,” said School Board President Joyce Wilkerson. “This tremendous gift will not only help us to ensure these safe spaces for every student, it will free us to direct our focus to investing in a new and compelling vision for school facilities. I thank the University of Pennsylvania for this incredible gift which is an investment in all of our city’s children.”

“We are thrilled to have this very generous contribution from the University of Pennsylvania,” said Dr. Hite. “It will be a great support as we move forward to address the immediate environmental conditions in all of our schools. This will allow us to shift our focus to creating 21st century learning environments for all students.”

Penn’s commitment to environmental remediation is one of many contributions that the University makes to the School District and the broader community to provide important support to public education in Philadelphia. In partnership with the School District and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the University has invested more than \$25 million over the past 15 years in the District’s top-performing Penn Alexander School, providing land for the school, funding for construction, and annual payments of approximately \$1 million for operations. In 2013, the University deepened its commitment to the nearby Henry C. Lea Elementary School with an expanded partnership. With a Penn Graduate School of Education (<https://www.gse.upenn.edu/>)-based liaison on site serving as a partnership coordinator, 16 Penn-affiliated organizations facilitate 37 district partner programs at Lea. Penn’s 12 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools, led by Penn’s Graduate School of Education, as well as Penn centers including the Penn Museum (<https://www.penn.museum/>) and Penn Libraries (<https://www.library.upenn.edu/>), operate more than 500 activities in 248 schools in every catchment area throughout the School District.

“Penn’s contribution will catalyze even more aggressive and comprehensive remediation of environmental hazards in all our public schools,” said President Gutmann. “Philadelphia is our home. Education is at the very heart of all that we do at Penn, and we will continue to ensure that we are doing all that we can to support the success of public education in Philadelphia. Our schoolchildren and teachers deserve no less.”

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DATE

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SUBTOPICS

President, Outreach, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Penn Compact

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