



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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August 7, 2020

Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

We are writing in support of the School District of Philadelphia and as advocates for the equitable distribution of state funding for education. We recently became aware of the inequitable formula used to distribute funding through the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Disaster Emergency School Health and Safety Grant program. We are asking you to use your Governor's Emergency Education funds to fix this disparity and ensure Philadelphia students receive their fair share of state funding.

Numerous studies, articles, and testimony over the last five months have highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of low income, Black, and Brown students. In testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor, John B. King Jr, President and CEO of the Education Trust, stated that Black and Brown students have disproportionately less access to remote learning devices and high speed internet, are more likely to have teachers who are less prepared to implement online learning, and tend to have parents and caregivers who are unable to telework.

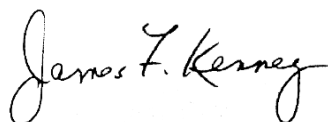
A McKinsey analysis of the impact of the pandemic on educational outcomes concluded that learning loss and rising high school drop-out rates will be greatest among low income, Black, and Brown students. This will in turn translate to lower lifetime earnings and an annual Gross Domestic Product loss of \$173 billion to \$271 billion by 2040. The way to change these outcomes is to invest in school districts, like Philadelphia, that educate predominantly low income, Black, and Brown students.

Unfortunately, due to the distribution formula in the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Disaster Emergency School Health and Safety Grant program, the District receives less than every other school district in the commonwealth, when comparing grant awards based on Average Daily Membership. The District's share would increase from \$13 million to more than \$40 million if the Fair Funding Formula was used to distribute these funds.

We know the District will go as far as it can with the resource available to ensure that every student receives a rigorous educational experience during this unprecedented time. While the District will start the year fully remote, the goal is to get students into classrooms by December. To achieve this goal, the District will have to make significant investments in its buildings, stock up on personal protective equipment and health and safety supplies and ensure that students have remote learning devices and are connected to the internet. Based on the District's initial cost projections for a hybrid model, we know these activities will cost the District at least \$60 million.

We know you share our desire to make sure Philadelphia students receive a high-quality education. In order to do that, the District is dependent on an equitable distribution of state funds. The future of our students, our city, and our commonwealth are tied to how we lead during this pandemic. We need your leadership to make sure Philadelphia students have the same opportunity as their peers to a safe, healthy, and rigorous education throughout the 2020-2021 school year. We urge you to use your Governor's Emergency Education funds to correct the funding disparity in the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Disaster Emergency School Health and Safety Grant program. This investment is not just the morally right thing to do for our students, it is also the smart thing to do for the future prosperity of our commonwealth.

Sincerely,



James F. Kenney
Mayor, City of Philadelphia



Darrell L. Clarke
President, Philadelphia City Council