



Quality Education for All

As a student activist in Philadelphia's public schools, mom of a public school graduate, founder of PA's first bilingual charter school, and Council's leading advocate for school funding and Education Committee Chair, Maria has spent her career fighting for Philadelphia's students. Maria has always advocated for school funding. During COVID, she worked daily with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to open school buildings as community hubs to get necessary resources into the hands of students and school communities. As Mayor, she will bring a lifetime of experience working with Philadelphia's public schools and a vision to ensure all students succeed.

Maria's Vision for 2030

With hard-won local control of our schools, an improved fiscal outlook, and millions in federal funds to spend for pandemic recovery, now is the time we must ask – what is our promise to Philadelphia's families?

- Every Philadelphia student deserves to be able to walk to a safe, welcoming public elementary school.
- Every Philadelphia high school student deserves exciting high school options to prepare for a career, college, and beyond.
- Schools are the hearts of their communities, and should be places where any neighbor can find assistance.
- We must invest in our students, removing the barriers that make it harder for them to learn.

Safe, Welcoming Neighborhood Schools

- For many children in Philadelphia, school is the place where they are safest. The city and district must provide support and resources to principals, school leaders, and school communities so they can create the warm, welcoming environment that all students deserve.

- On Council, Maria led the charge to create a School Building Authority, empowered to convene experts to address school building issues and capital improvements so that the Superintendent and School Board can focus on student achievement and academics. Maria believes that the most important thing about a school building is the community of people inside, and that we can acknowledge changing needs while still strengthening our neighborhood schools and investing in schools for the 21st century.
- A diverse community of over 17,000 SDP students speak over 155 different languages at home, yet Pennsylvania still has no bilingual teaching certificate. We must continue to expand curricula and develop Philadelphia's own bilingual school designation, including language accessibility and celebrating the history, heroes, and values of SDP students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

Diverse High School Options for All

- Expanding dual enrollment opportunities - Enrolling high school juniors and seniors in college coursework at Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) gives our students a leg up on their future and represents a cost savings for the District.
- Free CCP for All - The Biden administration has established free community college as a cornerstone of a national education agenda, and Philadelphia can be the leader and offer free CCP to all.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Union Pathways - All graduates of our CTE programs should be eligible for union apprenticeship in their chosen trade. Maria will work with the state and the building trades to align curriculum and skills development to streamline access to union jobs.
- Educational Opportunities for All - All SDP family members should have access to School District/CTE/CCP programs. Streamlining our dual enrollment offerings will allow us to create evening and weekend opportunities for parents, young adults, and family members to retrain, learn new skills, and pursue high school equivalency,, certifications, or college coursework.

Real Community Schools

- School Buildings are Community Anchors – With the support of federal pandemic recovery dollars in the 21-22 school year, the SDP was able to open over 100 schools in the summer and is expanding building access year round to community partners. Maria believes we can continue to grow partnerships to better align crime prevention programs, Parks and Recreation programming, and community sports and educational opportunities.

- Early Childhood Education - As the landscape of programs and providers can be overwhelming for families, Maria will engage a comprehensive review of our entire early childhood pipeline, with a goal of universal pre-k and kindergarten enrollment, where we still fall short, and a financial realignment of our preschool programs with federal and state dollars.
- Feeder Pattern Overhaul - Feeder patterns must be updated so that school communities better reflect their changing neighborhoods. We must embrace creative co-location solutions with rec centers, community institutions, and other neighborhood assets.
- Behavioral Health Services - The ongoing implementation of IBHS reforms presents the opportunity to continually reassess the way we provide behavioral health supports, consider ways to integrate those services into a community schools model, and deepen and refine relationships with community service providers.

Investing in Students

- Transportation - Maria has fought to expand safe routes to school, especially in neighborhoods most affected by violence. She saved SEPTA Student Transpasses from budget cuts and will protect and expand students' access to safe public transit.
- Expanded Meal Service - Students can't learn when they are hungry. Maria will push for expanded school meal services, piloting expanded programs to include breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Our school kitchens can be community resources, professional training grounds, and places of safety and comfort for students.
- Device Access and Digital Literacy - Adapting for the pandemic, remote learning got us to a 1-1 device ratio in a few short weeks. Now we must leverage that investment to keep expanding affordable and free home internet access, and provide digital literacy opportunities for entire families.