

Green Party of Philadelphia

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GREEN PARTY PROPOSAL FOR PHILADELPHIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Green Party of Philadelphia, www.gpop.org, recognizes that Philadelphia's public schools are facing a crisis. Philadelphia has the eighth largest school district in the nation by enrollment, with 154,482 students in 257 schools. This number includes privately managed and alternative education schools. There are 40,483 students enrolled in 74 charter schools. Additionally, Philadelphia is the only county in Pennsylvania that does not have an elected school board.

A great challenge is now facing the people of Philadelphia: to educate ourselves to build a just, sustainable, humane and democratic future, and to become responsible and effective citizens of the local and global communities we share. The Green Party believes every child deserves a public education that fosters critical and holistic thought, and provides the breadth and depth of learning necessary to become an active citizen and a constructive member of society.

The Green Party sees two important tasks before us to reach this objective. The first task is to reorganize Philadelphia's school system under the democratic control of its students, parents and teachers. A new Philadelphia School Board should be democratically elected by Philadelphia's voters. To prevent a take-over by corporate interests, our School Board Elections must be publicly funded and must use instant run-off voting. In addition, students and teachers should have their own elected representatives on our new School Board.

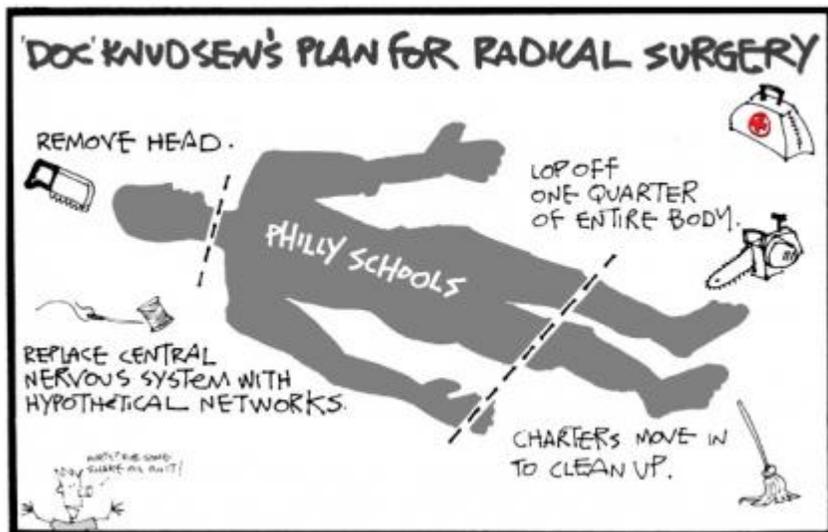
The Green Party is unalterably opposed to the dissolution of public schools and the privatization of education. Therefore, our second task is to end all attempts to privatize

What we stand for?

Stand for something or end up falling for anything! If you believe in these values, chances are you already Green and didn't even know it!

- ▶ Grassroots Democracy
- ▶ Social Justice/Equal Opportunity
- ▶ Ecological Wisdom
- ▶ Non-violence
- ▶ Economic Justice/Community-based Economics
- ▶ Feminism/Gender Equality
- ▶ Decentralization
- ▶ Respect for Diversity
- ▶ Personal and Global Responsibility
- ▶ Future Focus/Sustainability

Read more at <www.gpop.org/tenkey.shtml>.



Eric Joselyn in www.thenotebook.org

education, which have been sweeping Philadelphia under the direction of the SRC and their appointed superintendents. We maintain that public education is a public responsibility and that all relevant decisions must be made by community stakeholders and their representatives. We oppose all schemes for corporations to pursue private profits at the expense of public schools and their students and teachers. Studies have shown that privatized schools cost more to run and do not provide an

educational benefit to the students.

There are two additional reforms which will lead to a better education for Philadelphia's public school students. The most important will be an equalization of educational resources. The most effective reform plan is useless without the money to implement it, and this has been felt in the most basic reforms, such as hiring teachers to decrease class sizes. Right now, Philadelphia's schools are handicapped by a discriminatory funding system, which awards more money for the education of wealthy students and much less money for the education of poor students. School District of Philadelphia spent \$13,272.40 per pupil in 2010. For comparison, the Lower Merion School District spent \$26,570.76 per pupil in 2010, the highest in the state. We want to see this discriminatory funding challenged in court, unless it is changed by the General Assembly.

The second reform which will lead to improved education is to end the school-to-prison pipeline. Too many of Philadelphia's students fail to graduate from High School. Instead, too many of them go straight to jail. The Green Party agrees with the American Civil Liberties Union, "Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services. Instead, they are isolated, punished and pushed out. 'Zero-tolerance' policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while high-stakes testing programs encourage educators to push out low-performing students to improve their schools' overall test scores. Students of color are especially vulnerable to push-out trends and the discriminatory application of discipline."

In conclusion, the Green Party holds that those who are interested in educational reform must recognize that our children are not learning in a vacuum. In order to have a truly successful educational system, we will ultimately need broad societal reform: an end to hunger in Philadelphia; living-wage jobs for our children when they graduate; real political empowerment and opportunities for civic engagement; affordable housing; and single-payer healthcare. The Green Party is the only political party working to achieve all these policies.