



City of Philadelphia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION RELEASES MIDTERM REPORT ON EDUCATION GOALS

Philadelphia, January 13, 2010 – Today the Mayor's Office of Education released *Shaping an Educated City: A Two-Year Report on Mayor Nutter's Education Goals*, an evaluation of the Nutter Administration's efforts to increase the number of Philadelphia students graduating from high school and to create a more educated city in which all citizens have the opportunity to reach their potential.

"I am proud of the progress that we have made over the last two years but recognize that we have much further to go and must continue to focus on improving the educational outcomes and opportunities of all Philadelphians," said Mayor Michael A. Nutter. "If we continue to increase the number of people graduating from high school; if we continue to knock down real and perceived barriers to college; and if we continue to build an educated, skilled workforce in Philadelphia, we will at the same time address many of the other challenges that we face as a city."

The Mayor's Office of Education, led by Chief Education Officer Lori Shorr and her Deputy Sharon Gaskins, coordinates the work of city departments and builds networks for collaboration among key partners, including the School District of Philadelphia, the region's colleges and universities, the business community, and the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success—a body appointed by the Mayor that oversees the city's work to achieve the his education goals.

"Whether it's in safety, truancy, mental health services, or recycling, the School District and the City have been able to accomplish so much more together than either of us could have accomplished separately," said Dr. Arlene Ackerman, Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia. "In my 40-year career in public education, I've learned that it takes the support of the entire community to create and sustain quality schools. It's a great asset to have that active support at the highest level of City government so all of our children can achieve greatness."

two years since the establishment of the Mayor's Office of Education, including Mayor Nutter's advocacy for increased school funding and a new state education funding formula which led to an additional \$51 million in funding for the School District of Philadelphia via the basic education subsidy.

"Mayor Nutter did an extraordinary job in 2008 mobilizing not only the Philadelphia business leaders but also mayors and school superintendents from around the Commonwealth to advocate for urgently needed changes in how we fund schools," said Governor Edward G. Rendell. "I could not have asked for a more persuasive and effective partner. The Mayor's leadership was a significant reason that we were able to legislate a new fairer funding formula for public education."

The report also lays out priorities for the coming year. One key priority is a focus on increasing the number of Philadelphians who have the opportunity to attend and complete college. In the coming weeks Mayor Nutter will open a new PhillyGoes2College office in City Hall, a 3-1-1 of college-going. This office, on the first floor of City Hall, will provide information and referrals to young people and adults who need help navigating the college preparation and enrollment process.

"Over the past two years we've seen an increased citywide commitment to improving educational outcomes for Philadelphia's young people and adults," said Dr. Lori Shorr, Chief Education Officer. "Collaboration has been key to the progress we've made thus far, and it will play an even more critical role in our future work to increase high school graduation and college attainment rates. Thanks to the work of many, more people than ever before believe that we can shape the educational future of our city, and that we all have a part to play in achieving that success."

Key accomplishments identified in the report include:

- **A 12% increase in the number of Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completed** contributing to **\$194 million in additional funds** for Philadelphia college students. The PhillyGoes2College Campaign recruited and trained 100 City employee volunteers to help Philadelphia high school seniors and their families complete financial aid applications.
- Since January 2008, the School District's high school graduation rates have trended upward, including a **3 percentage point increase in both the four-year and six-year graduation rates**.
- To help students who are off-track or who have dropped out, the School District added **1,490 seats in new small schools and innovative programs** for the 2009-10 school year. There are now 5,000 seats allocated to these schools and programs.
- In 2008 Mayor Nutter led an unprecedented campaign to advocate for increased school funding and a new state education funding formula which led to **an additional \$51 million funding** for the School District of Philadelphia.
- From the 2007-08 to 2008-09 school year, School District schools saw a **14.7% decrease in violent incidents citywide**. In addition, state-designated "persistently dangerous" schools saw a 19.8% decrease in violent incidents over the same timeframe.
- The establishment of a **Re-Engagement Center** jointly staffed by School District and Department of Human Services employees, which has provided educational assessment, academic counseling, and access to support services to over 3,700 former dropouts who sought to return to school.

The report will be posted online at www.phila.gov.