



## Improving the lives of children and families in Southeastern PA

Spring-Summer 2016

### OUR KIDS ARE WORTH IT

On June 16, 2016, Philadelphia made history as the first major American city to enact a tax on sugar-sweetened and diet beverages (soda). And PCCY was there.

As a mayoral candidate, Jim Kenney was an early signer of the Pledge for Philadelphia's Children, a PCCY-led effort backed by 26 of the most respected youth-serving organizations in

the city. As Mayor, he wasted little time setting an ambitious agenda for his nascent administration, delivering on two major promises: expansion of quality pre-k and upgrading public recreation centers and parks.

City Council passed the Soda Tax by a commanding margin of 13-4. After a grueling, contentious months-long campaign, it's a stunning accomplishment by Philadelphia's new Mayor, Council President Darrell Clarke and his Council colleagues.

Kenney described the game-changing initiative as not only a moral imperative, but a fiscal one as well, saving millions by reducing the need for services like special education and fueling long-term economic growth.

PCCY was a key partner in Philadelphia's fight for a Fair Future



Kids from Western Learning Center fashioned their own "Pre-K Rocks" hats to help convince City Council to vote yes on behalf of 6,500 of their friends.



A preschooler from St. Mary's Nursery School gets on her soapbox at City Hall.

(fairfuturephilly.com), the coalition campaigning to pass a tax on sugary drinks to pay for these much-needed investments, including 6,500 new quality pre-k spots.

### ARE OUR KIDS' HOMES SICK?

The avenues of Philadelphia have a long and storied history, as do many of the city's older homes. But embedded in the walls of too many homes is a chapter Philadelphia can't turn the page on: lead paint.

The crisis in Flint, Michigan, sparked renewed concern over this longstanding health issue and the fact that the rate of children with lead poisoning in the Philadelphia region surpassed those in Flint sent many scrambling for answers.

In Flint, the direct actions of government caused widespread lead contamination. But in Pennsylvania, inaction is allowing another generation of mostly low-income children to be exposed to toxic lead-laced paint hiding behind layers of clean paint, as older homes get worn down and cracks form in walls.

On its face, Philadelphia's lead problem doesn't seem as urgent or severe as what transpired in the large Michigan city an hour from Detroit. Officials changed its water source from Detroit's water department to a local source, exposing 6,000 to 12,000 children to high levels of lead.

But consider this: A little more than three percent of tested children in Flint meet the Center for Disease Control's threshold for high

**FACT: 9 OUT OF 10 HOUSES IN PHILADELPHIA WERE BUILT PRIOR TO 1980, BEFORE THE LEAD PAINT BAN**

lead levels. In Pennsylvania, children tested in 2014 at much higher levels.

That's why PCCY set out on a two year campaign that resulted in a new Philadelphia law requiring that landlords test their property for lead hazards to help protect young tenants from lead poisoning.

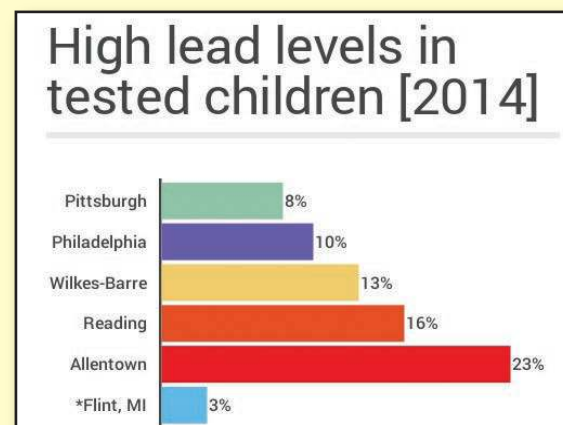
Lead poisoning can cause complications during pregnancy and high blood pressure. For children, lead poisoning, even at low levels, can cause life-long brain damage, nerve damage, and learning disabilities.

At around \$10k to remediate a single contaminated home, diminishing federal funding means the City's Department of Health can only fix 100 houses a year.

Getting lead out of houses is expensive, but

the cost pales in comparison to paying for poisoned kids' health care, special education and juvenile delinquency bills – and does not touch the cost of human potential lost by the ravages of a poisoning we know how to prevent.

PCCY continues to advocate at the local, state, and federal levels of government to do more to protect our children and launched petitions to urge action on this unyielding crisis.



Source: PA Department of Health

## GALA CELEBRATION OF PCCY IN ITS 35TH YEAR



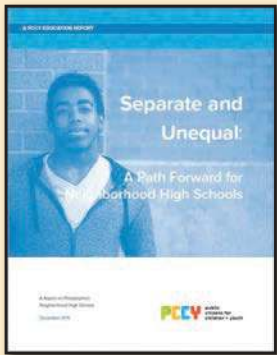
Governor Ed Rendell, with Executive Director Donna Cooper, stresses the importance of PCCY's advocacy.

This year, Public Citizens for Children and Youth celebrated its 35th anniversary with passionate advocates, supporters, elected officials and other luminaries at Vie in Center City. With great food, special performances from students, and our always popular live auction, we honored our 2016 Public Citizen of the Year William George, President and CEO of Health Partners Plan and longtime advocate for children. HPP has signed on as a partner to the Dream Care Coalition.



Mayor Kenney praises PCCY as a key partner of the history-making Soda Tax campaign to fund pre-k, recreation centers and parks.

## SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: NEIGHBORHOOD HIGH SCHOOLS



They educate the majority of Philadelphia students but face tremendous obstacles to do the job right. Our neighborhood high schools are pulling their weight and, as it turns out, the weight of a few other schools as well.

A major PCCY report shined light on the state of neighborhood high schools in the Philadelphia School District, highlighting the crushing challenges

these schools face as they bear the lion's share of responsibility for the City's special needs, English-learning and impoverished student population.

In "Separate And Unequal: A Path Forward for Neighborhood High Schools," PCCY found that these schools educate twice the share of child-welfare-involved students that magnet high schools do and a 30% larger share than other special admission high schools.

Further, just four neighborhood schools educate nearly half of the district's English-language learners, while the share of ELL students attending special-admission high schools is less than 10%.

### More:

- Neighborhood schools had a high principal turnover rate, averaging four or more principals in a five year period. Academic-admission high schools saw only one new principal during the same period.
- Neighborhood schools have 400 fewer teachers than they had four years ago.
- Out of all schools in Philadelphia, neighborhood schools were the only



PSD Superintendent Bill Hite addresses the media at "Separate and Unequal" event at Roxborough High School

ones to lose counselors while increasing security staff over the past three school years.

Superintendent Bill Hite applauded the report, which was produced with information from the School District of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services, and CHOP's PolicyLab, and embraced its specific and results-oriented recommendations.

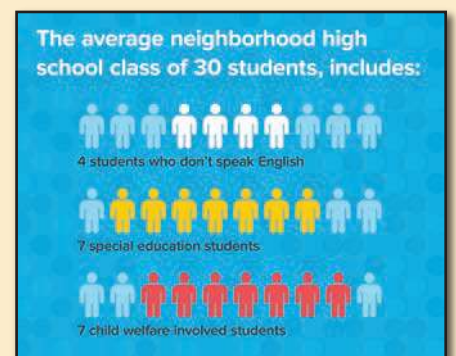
### Key Recommendations:

- Create a new position reporting to the Superintendent to lead the charge to improve neighborhood schools
- Any new funding received would first go to investing in neighborhood schools
- Create a new policy for funding to follow students so that receiving schools will receive money for students who enroll mid-year
- Adopt a District-wide plan to retain effective principals and teachers
- Increase smart and available remediation and expand access to college prep courses

Despite continued underfunding, there are reasons

to celebrate critical gains for our schools. In March, Superintendent Hite announced that he was putting a nurse and a counselor in every school.

The report was funded by Project U-Turn, a cross-sector collaborative led by the Philadelphia Youth Network, and the Philadelphia Foundation.



## DREAM CARE: CARE FOR KIDS WITHOUT COVERAGE

In its first meeting, members of the Dream Care Coalition discussed their shared vision to cover all of the Commonwealth's children, regardless of their immigration status, and charted an urgent course of action to make the dream a reality.

We can't afford NOT to cover all children. At The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia alone, they spend \$4,600 per child in uncompensated care, yet Children's Health Insurance Program coverage costs just half of that



Representing organizations from across Southeastern PA, the Dream Care Coalition gathers at its first meeting.

*"The compelling medical, social and economic evidence in support of Dream Care is clear, but I also support expanding health care to all kids because it's the right thing to do."*

—Dr. Steven A. Shapiro,  
Chair, Pediatrics Department, Abington-Jefferson Health

amount – about \$2,500 per year.

Pennsylvania is losing its national standing for children. While we are the birthplace of CHIP, we are still not among the five states and the District of Columbia that cover all kids. But we have the ability to change that.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, starting last year, the federal government is paying 89% of the state's CHIP costs – up from 66% previously. This provides an extra \$591 per child per year or a total of \$92 million more available for the 150,000 kids PA anticipates enrolling in CHIP this year. Federal funds cannot be used to pay for undocumented kids' coverage, so the state could use a portion of the vast savings and expand CHIP to cover all kids.

Based on other states' experience, PCCY estimates that about 25% of the newly eligible children would enroll in year one at a cost of about \$15.4 million for the first year – amounting to little more than a rounding error in Harrisburg.

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: FAIR FUNDING, PRE-K

PCCY literally drove the bus to make education a top priority for legislators in Harrisburg, taking educators and parents to meet directly with elected representatives. There have been six Capitol Caravans and three more to come in the months ahead to advocate for Pre-K for PA, the statewide campaign to bring universal quality pre-k to the Commonwealth.

These trips to the Capitol include the advocacy work we do on behalf of the Campaign for Fair Education Funding, of which PCCY is a founding member. After two years, the Campaign declared a landmark victory in the passage of a new bipartisan funding formula for Pennsylvania schools. Adhering to the recommendations of the Campaign, the new formula will direct state funds according to the number of students in each district as well as consider other crucial

factors, including number of students living in poverty.

At a press conference to announce the new funding formula, PCCY's Executive Director Donna Cooper said, "Our powerful statewide coalition has a demonstrated track record of success, and we agree that we must now get the legislature to fund the formula so that we finally end the curse of a child's zip code determining the public education quality in Pennsylvania. We succeeded once and we will succeed again." The Campaign pressed for \$400 million in new education funding to 'flex the muscle' of the new formula to address the historical inequalities of past budgets, including the damaging cuts of the Corbett administration which took a whopping \$1 billion out of public schools.



PCCY's Donna Cooper presses for \$400 million to fund Pennsylvania's new funding formula on the steps of the Philadelphia School District.

## 600 REASONS TO SMILE



One young patient reviews brushing techniques at University of Pennsylvania's pediatric dental clinic.

More than 600 kids received free dental care appointments during PCCY's Give Kids A Smile Day event, our biggest dental outreach yet. In

addition to providing much needed care, Smile Day also serves to underscore the taxing realities of children who live without health insurance in Pennsylvania.

PCCY received terrific support from media allies like Clear Channel, which ran our Smile Day announcement over 200 times across five radio stations and Latino radio El Zol airing our public service announcement in Spanish. Automated calls went out to Philadelphia School District parents and PCCY enjoyed a flurry of activity on social media outlets promoting Smile Day.

The high profile of the event did mean that we had to contend with a long waiting list of

children hoping to see a dentist. Fortunately, PCCY referred parents and guardians to low-cost dental care as we do regularly through the PCCY hotline. (215-563-5858 x17)



Smiles received at Havertown's Image Dental in Delaware County.

## LEGAL BRIEFS

### Lawsuit for Education Equality

In December, parents and school districts reengaged in a lawsuit against the Commonwealth for providing inadequate resources to educate kids and discriminating against poor districts, contrary to the state Constitution's equal protection provision. Although the Commonwealth Court dismissed the suit in April 2015, the state Supreme Court is currently hearing an appeal of that dismissal. The plaintiffs, supported by organizations like PCCY, objected to the Commonwealth hiding behind the Education Clause in the Constitution to duck judicial review, the very clause adopted to address inadequate funding.

### SRC Ruling Reverberates

In February, the state Supreme Court ruled that the Philadelphia School Reform Commission lacked the authority to suspend parts of the state charter law and school code, finding that imposing limits to charter school enrollment was unconstitutional. As a result, districts are at the mercy of charter operators who can fill charter schools with as many students they can handle, creating a financially disastrous predicament where unchecked charter spending will mean siphoning even more money from already cash-strapped public schools. The ruling could affect every district with charter schools across Pennsylvania. In April, the Court dismissed the SRC's appeal on the ruling.

"The court has sent a clear signal that it understands it is the legislature's responsibility to ensure the proper operation of our school districts. That responsibility requires the legislature to put the funds in place and adopt a formula that guarantees every student in every school district can receive a quality public education." Donna Cooper, Executive Director, PCCY

### Shutting Down Berks

PCCY joined a powerful coalition of organizations united to shut down a dangerous federal facility unlawfully detaining women and children in Berks County.

Many of the families illegally detained are seeking asylum in the U.S., having fled violence and rampant corruption in their home countries, most often in Latin America. But instead of refuge here, they've found violence in illegal captivity in Berks County. In 2015, one guard was arrested for repeatedly raping a 19-year-old mother, witnessed, on one occasion, by an 8-year-old girl. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported already traumatized young children are experiencing "hopelessness and depression".

Berks is operating in violation of a federal judge's ruling that detaining families in secured or unlicensed facilities was against the law. Berks had their license revoked by the PA Department of Human Services this year.



# Thank you

As PCCY does not seek or accept government funds, we are especially grateful to the private and corporate foundations that support our campaigns.

Special thanks go out to:

- The Barra Foundation for selecting us for a two year Barra Award
- The William Penn Foundation for being a lead supporter of our work on the Campaign for Fair Education Funding and Pre-K for PA
- The Pew Charitable Trusts for awarding PCCY a three-year grant for our work to enroll uninsured children in CHIP and Medicaid
- The Christopher Ludwick Foundation and the Christian R. & Mary F. Lindback Foundations for being early supporters of arts education through the 2016-17 Picasso Project

## MOMENTUM BUILDS FOR PRE-K FOR PA

Despite political turmoil, a bipartisan statewide push for pre-k for the Commonwealth continues. In April, mayors and other leaders of mid-sized cities gathered in Harrisburg to discuss ways to expand quality pre-k across Pennsylvania.

Business leaders, educators and parents all agree that it's a critical investment that will pay dividends for cities, communities, families and students. With Philadelphia passing its much-lauded tax on soda powered by the necessity of early childhood education, has Pre-K for PA reached the tipping point?



Mayors and leaders champion Pre-K for PA in Harrisburg. From left—Mayor Richard Gray [Lancaster], Mayor Ed Pawlowski, [Allentown], Mayor Sherry Capella [Lebanon], Council President Det Ansinn [Doylestown], Township Supervisor Dick Hadley [Cranberry], Executive Director Rick Schuettler, PA Municipal League, Mayor Kim Bracey [York].

## PICASSO PROJECT INSPIRES LEARNING

This year the Picasso Project awarded grants totaling \$60,901 to thirteen public and charter schools in twelve Philadelphia zip codes. These teacher driven projects provide support in bringing arts resources and programming into classrooms and schools to increase access to the arts for all students and in turn, improve learning outcomes, increase engagement, and improve school climate.

This year's projects include an outdoor mosaic reading garden, a recorded CD of original songs, and a youth café featuring original spoken word poetry. South Philadelphia High School put on a fabulous production of the musical "Dreamgirls," after 10 years without a music program. SPHS students were featured performers at the Barnes Museum at a special celebration of the Picasso Project in May.



Students from South Philadelphia HS perform a number from their production of Dreamgirls, at the Barnes Museum.



Murrell Dobbins High School's 'Sounds of Dobbins' brought new audio equipment and professional engineers to capture the sounds of music, poetry, and arts education advocacy.

Through our school grants, the Picasso Project seeks to address the continuing need for arts programs in Philadelphia schools and highlights the importance that arts education plays in creating a well rounded experience which prepares students for college and future employment.

In addition to providing rich arts experiences for participating students, these projects also use their momentum and successes to advocate for increased access to the arts for all students in Philadelphia, so that every student can experience learning through music, art and dance.

## Public Citizens for Children and Youth

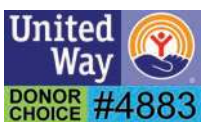
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