

Philadelphia School Partnership Offers an Array of Programs and Services to Support Education in Our City

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

All families want their children to benefit from education at the best schools with the best educators. To make that happen, families need information to assist them in evaluating, selecting and accessing schools.

The Philadelphia School Partnership (PSP), a nonprofit organization, provides free school rating information to families on their GreatPhillySchools website <https://greatphillyschools.org/> and in booklets in both English and Spanish. Public district, public charter, parochial, and private schools are rated on 10-point student performance scales, overall and on specific factors. Standardized test scores are used when available. High school ratings include college matriculation.

In 2018, GreatPhillySchools rated 55 Philadelphia schools 8 or higher on the 10-point scale. Albert M. Greenfield, our local public elementary school (K-8), received an overall rating of 8, with individual factor scores of 7 for math, 8 for reading, 8 for science, 9 for attendance, and 10 for school incidents.

GreatPhillySchools provides additional information about each school's mission, points of pride, safety and culture, and accreditations and honors. (Some parents argue that schools should not be rated only on quantitative student performance scores; they recommend talking to other parents about schools to supplement the ratings.)

Annually, 130,000 people access the information resources published by the Philadelphia School Partnership. In 2018, nearly 16,000 parents and children attended the GreatPhillySchools K-8 and High School Fairs, where they connected with representatives from over 190 schools to find the one that best fit their needs.

Not just a rating service, the Philadelphia School Partnership invests in supporting and expanding quality schools of all types (kindergarten through 12th grade). PSP pools donated funds from national foundations, local foundations, businesses, and individuals to support its projects.

"PSP is the largest public charity investing in Philadelphia K-12 public schools," says David Saenz Jr., Manager of Public Affairs. "Since 2011, PSP has invested over \$75 million in 66 schools: 42 public charter; 14 public district; seven parochial; [and] three private. PSP start-up and growth grants to schools range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million."

In 2018, PSP created over 2,000 new educational opportunities for students by supporting five schools, including the opening of new schools and the expansion of existing quality schools. PSP helped open Deep Roots Charter School, whose model places two co-teachers in each classroom, and next year will help open Hebrew Public School; both are charter school operators new to Philadelphia.

In the future, PSP wants to spend more money on career and technical education, as opposed to an exclusive focus on college prep. Saenz reports, "PSP has invested in schools and programs that offer career and technical education, industry apprenticeships, internships and training, including the Finishing Trades Institute, Cristo Rey High School, Roxborough High School, and Big Picture Vaux High School."

To see Philadelphia School Partnership's portfolio of schools go to <http://philaschoolpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PSP-MAP.pdf>

PSP's third mission is recruiting and training principals and educators. Last year, over 170 school leaders attended PSP's K-12 Leadership Conference, where experts taught them how to develop educators' methods to increase students' achievement in math. Since 2013, PSP has provided grants to Philadelphia Pathways to Urban Leadership (PhillyPLUS) to recruit, select, and prepare nearly 100 urban school principals to lead and coach teachers. PhillyPLUS offers a two-year principal-certification program that includes intensive summer training, a year of hands-on practice in a local school, and support from a mentor principal and leadership coach.

PSP attracts new qualified teachers and provides educational opportunities for teachers who want to improve their skills through TeachPHL, a new website with access to job openings and professional development opportunities. PSP Executive Director Mark Gleason called TeachPHL "a collective endeavor to attract the best possible teachers to our city and then to keep them here, working in schools, feeling supported, feeling challenged, feeling rewarded."

For more information about Philadelphia School Partnership, visit <https://philaschoolpartnership.org/>. To help meet the educational needs of Philadelphia students, donate online or send a check to Philadelphia School Partnership, 150 S. Independence Mall West, Suite 1200, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

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