

## Philadelphia Must Contribute to Solving the Climate Crisis to Ensure a Thriving Future for Our Kids

### What Kids Need

Kids need to have confidence in the future of the planet. Greening their communities not only stems the impacts of climate change but supports the everyday well-being of kids and their families. ***This is why the next mayor must adopt and implement the recommendations of the Green Living Plan.***

Kids also spend lots of time in school. 180 days to be exact. But as it stands, the very place where kids spend a majority of their time is staying too much on the sidelines as the climate worsens to the detriment of our environment and kids.

***That is why the next Mayor must do all he or she to make sure school board members and superintendent make schools clean and green.*** The next mayor can ensure school board members:

- Invest in building repairs at a more rapid pace to ensure that school buildings are safe and non toxic learning environments.
- Procure more buses that are reliant on renewable energy or electricity.
- Redesign school meal standards to boost the the share of ingredients purchased in our section of the country and grown with sustainable practices in accordance with USDA standards.
- Create curriculum that teaches climate justice and connects this learning to the burgeoning field of STEM occupations associated with resilience and reducing the pace of global warming.
- Spur new partnerships to transform school years to reduce storm water run-off and provide lively places for students to play and learn about environmental stewardship.

As the City plays the leading role connecting students to summer jobs, the mayor can ensure that students jobs that prepare them for green careers.

### Why This Matters To Kids, Parents and, The City

We only have one world to inhabit, and while climate solutions can be large-scale – like accelerating the shift to renewable energy – the next mayor can start locally. They can adopt the Green Living Plan which improves the quality of life of the neighborhoods where students live, and focus on greening schools, where kids spend much of their time. Our schools can be safe havens where students can learn, build friendships, and find passions that prepare them to be model citizens that take care of the environment.

Our city is on the brink of change, and it is up to us to determine what type of change it will be. Will we invest in our students, make sure that nobody has to suffer the worst effects of the climate crisis, and create a Philadelphia where future generations are positioned to be part of the climate solution?

## The Details

Responding to the climate crisis can start locally within a system where Philadelphia students spend much of their time: their school and the operations that contribute to its functioning.

This means making sure Philadelphia students have the knowledge and opportunities to choose better, more environmentally sound paths. It also means making sure the schools where they spend much of their time are better shielded from rising temperatures and extreme weather.

Philadelphia school buildings are not climate resilient and far too many are toxic. Further the HVAC systems, to the extent they are working or are even in the buildings, are far from energy efficient. Still a majority of schools don't have air conditioning putting students at risk of extreme heat. Meanwhile, school yards can play a positive role in protecting our waterways by reducing stormwater runoff.

In addition to ensuring school buildings are climate resilient, the mayor must make sure the School District is positioning itself and its students towards greener futures. The school fleet, for example, must be transitioned to running on alternative fuels or on electricity. While the District has already made some progress in this area, the timeline for greening the school bus fleet can be greatly accelerated.<sup>1</sup>

School meals represent another opportunity for addressing climate change. The mayor can work with the District to increase reliance on school meals made with ingredients grown in Pennsylvania or as close to the state as possible to reduce transportation expenses and, where feasible, access sustainably grown ingredients. All the while the school curriculum can increase student and staff knowledge of environmentally safe practices and STEM in general so that kids are prepared to advance policies that reduce the pace of climate change.

***In sum, the mayor can start where kids are: in schools and connect their learning and youth employment options to the green economy.***

## About The Kids Campaign

**The Kids Campaign** is a coalition of 60 plus child-serving groups in Philadelphia. Our coalition formed to make sure that the next mayor of Philadelphia is ready to do whatever it takes to ensure a **S.E.C.U.R.E.** future for every kid – a future with Safety, an Education, Careers, Uplift, Recreation, and a healthy Environment. A non-partisan effort, the Kids Campaign will share information parents and voters need to determine which candidate will make every day safer than the one before for children and youth. Organizations and individuals can learn more and join the Kids Campaign at [www.thekidscampaign.org](http://www.thekidscampaign.org).