



Sanctuary Schools

5 Point Platform



OUR PLATFORM

1

We want schools free of criminalization

2

We want a reinvestment in our education

3

We want culturally appropriate & responsive teaching curricula

4

We want accessible schools & representative teachers

5

We want trauma-informed schools who practice restorative justice and develop social and emotional learning spaces

What Do We Ground Ourselves In?

WE COME TO THIS FIGHT GROUNDED IN JUNTOS' LEGACY OF DIRECTLY IMPACTED MEMBER-LED ORGANIZING AROUND EDUCATION JUSTICE,

specifically around: school closures, budget cuts, demands for community control of schools and elimination of systemic and linguistic barriers that limit parent involvement and youth success.

We know that we are not alone in this fight, that insufficient funding, administrative oversight, and widespread institutionalization of carceral systems harmfully impact ALL students. We are committed to uplifting and amplifying the work of other organizations who have led the fight for educational justice in the city of Philadelphia.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR IS NOT NEW, SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN USED FOR TOO LONG AS COLONIAL TOOLS TO ASSIMILATE AND CRIMINALIZE YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES, WE SAY NO MORE!

Sanctuary Schools can and should be utilized as a vessel towards healing the traumatic impact of a global pandemic, racist government administration, and long term effects of heightened immigration enforcement.

Introduction

We know that youth thrive when they are engaged in learning spaces that are emotionally, physically, psychologically, and intellectually safe. We know that our parents are committed to supporting their child's learning and should be welcomed as interactive partners in the learning environment. We know that quality education is a priority for our community, our youth, our parents. We know that our city claims to hold these values, but when we look at school conditions, financial prioritization, and the ongoing criminalization of our young people, something just doesn't add up.

Philadelphia has declared itself a Sanctuary City, but how can you be a Sanctuary City without Sanctuary Schools? For far too long, young folks, educators, parents, and organizers have called for a reinvestment in our young people's education. Juntos' fight for human rights is seated in the call for quality education. We have always maintained that our communities know their needs best and we are committed to fighting for our collective vision until Philadelphia fully reflects our priorities.

We dream of Sanctuary Schools. We dream of spaces of true safety, abundance, exchange, engagement, healing, and radical learning. Sanctuary Schools are welcoming places where students feel comfortable moving outside of their comfort zones, where they feel supported and nurtured, and where parents feel a sense of belonging and ownership. Sanctuary Schools are free of criminalization and surveillance from both internal and external forces, they are spaces where kids feel comfortable making mistakes, that facilitate recognition, reflection, and processing of emotions.

For Philadelphia to have Sanctuary Schools, we must demand bold commitments from our city and school board that are upheld regardless of who is in office.

Our 5 Point Platform

We want schools free of criminalization, where our youth feel safe, nurtured and cared for.

1 We believe in an educational system that does not have any interaction with enforcement agencies or replicate enforcement strategies within the classroom. We know that black and brown youth are over targeted and overpoliced, treated as criminals instead of children. We recognize the internal and external factors that reinforce this targeting. We believe in educational spaces where kids are encouraged to make mistakes and have the support to learn from them. We demand #ICEFreeSchools. We demand #PoliceFreeSchools. We demand #SurveillanceFreeSchools.

We want a reinvestment in the education of our young people. This means a dramatic envisioning of the city and state's budget prioritization to fully address the ramifications of decades of insufficient funding.

2 Every year we hear there is not enough money for education, but we know this is not true. We know that it is not a question of scarcity, it is a question of distribution. We imagine schools where young people have access to nurses, counselors, and bilingual educators. We imagine schools where our youth have access to arts, music, and health classes. We imagine healthy school buildings, facilities free from toxins and full resourced classrooms, bathrooms and playgrounds.

Our 5 Point Platform

We want a culturally-responsive pedagogy that teaches about our true history and develops our young people to be critical of white, ableist, and imperialist norms.

3

We recognize that erasure and forced assimilation are favoured mechanisms of the state that enact a continued emotional and psychological violence onto Black, Brown, and LGBTQI youth. When our young people are taught lessons that are neither culturally affirming or representative of their lived experience, of their culture, or their heritage; we continue a legacy of harm that prioritizes conformity and compliance. By developing young people to be critical of the status quo, of the inequities present within our society, and how they have been enacted over time, we make steps toward building a more just future.

We want community control of schools. We want schools located in diverse neighborhoods with educators that are representative of students they teach.

4

Our families have witnessed the closing of schools in their neighborhood as part of the ever changing landscape of gentrification in the city of Philadelphia. Gentrification means community members are pushed out of their homes, forcing school changes that negatively affect students' ability to succeed in their classes. Without decision making structures where community members hold power, representation is meaningless. As pillars of the community, schools are where we will first begin our fight against forced displacement. By ensuring that our students and families are decision makers in their schools, we guarantee a learning environment over which our community has ownership.

Our 5 Point Platform

We want schools to be places of healing, we cannot fight against the criminalization of our young people and their families without also fighting for restorative learning environments.

5

If the city of Philadelphia is truly committed to the recovery and wellbeing of our community, we must make strides towards a future where our youth are thriving rather than surviving. We want policies that support students processing traumatic events that are grounded in trauma-informed practices and restorative justice, while making social and emotional learning spaces the status quo.

