

# Philadelphia Education★ Fund

## **Past and Present: A History of the Philadelphia Education Fund**

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MAY 2017

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## **Intro: Overview of the Philadelphia Education Fund**

Devoted to the mission of reform and improvement of education in the city of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Education Fund (Ed Fund) has been providing valuable professional development for teachers, opening paths for students to obtain a college education and career success, as well as acting as a thought-leader for policy. Operating for over thirty years, the Philadelphia Education Fund has left a mark on the educational landscape of the city and has affected the lives of tens of thousands of students, thousands of teachers, and numerous schools. As an independent non-profit advocacy organization, the Philadelphia Education Fund has acted as an agent of change in the School District of Philadelphia as well as a neutral party that connects schools, businesses, and community stakeholders. Committed to the vision that, “all young people in Philadelphia have the skills and opportunity to succeed in college and career,” the Ed Fund has provided numerous initiatives in fulfillment of its expectations and aspirations. From producing quality professional development for instructors to offering resources for students interested in college, the Ed Fund is a respected entity among educators within the School District of Philadelphia, the community, and beyond.

The bridges formed by the Philadelphia Education Fund allow the organization to act as an influential body in the city of Philadelphia. The Ed Fund has partnered with a wide array of entities. These include universities, charitable foundations, and advocacy organizations such as the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, with which it has a close relationship. Through the Ed Fund’s progress in educational policy and preparation of educators who pave the way of excellence for students, the organization has branded itself as a powerful ally to numerous entities. Bill Lynch, the former Dean of Drexel’s School of Education, expressed his “sincere gratitude and affection for [Philadelphia Education Fund’s] assistance and camaraderie during the years of [their] partnership,” and noted that the Ed Fund’s Teacher Residency Program was “a successful implementation of shared principles and values surrounding residency and learning community.” The passion for education demonstrated by the Ed Fund has made lasting impacts on policy, teachers, and students.

Located within the United Way building on the Benjamin Franklin Boulevard in Philadelphia downtown district, the Ed Fund’s headquarters personifies its ability to partner with other dynamic non-profit organizations. The Philadelphia Education Fund is comprised of approximately twenty-five employees who administer or support a wide range of programs as well as manage grants that provide valuable financial support within the Philadelphia School District. The Ed Fund raises millions of dollars that go towards supporting students’ education

in a meaningful and efficient way. The important aims of the Ed Fund have in many ways leveled the playing field for the students of Philadelphia.

The School District of Philadelphia has experienced its share of turbulence over the years; nonetheless, the Ed Fund has remained a consistent education advocate since its founding in 1984. For over thirty years, the Philadelphia Education Fund has been supporting inner-city youth who are often marginalized by the education system. Problems and changes within the District such as lack of funding, school reform, leadership transitions, and the growing number of charter schools, have given the Ed Fund the opportunity to facilitate ongoing and rewarding opportunities for teachers and students within the District. In recent years, the Philadelphia Education Fund has been celebrated by the media for its direct part in helping inner-city youth attend colleges. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the Columbia Broadcasting System both published stories that highlighted the Ed Fund's Rising Star award, a part of the Philadelphia Scholars program, which provides the means for troubled youth to overcome their surroundings and be the first in their family to attend college. Recent scholarship recipient, Ajae Hardy-Lewis, described that "Sometimes, all it takes is one person to recognize your potential and change your perception of yourself." Such examples convey the very personal and meaningful influence of the Philadelphia Education Fund.

During the last thirty years, the Ed Fund has developed a rich history and left an indelible imprint on the educational landscape of Philadelphia. However, there is more to the Ed Fund than its robust history; the organization seeks to maintain its powerful presence within the city of Philadelphia. Despite changes within the District and shifts in resources, the Ed Fund has remained honest to its mission: "We drive exceptional outcomes for all students by developing great teachers and building paths to college and career success." Boasting a strong history of advocacy in the city's extensive educational dominion, the Philadelphia Education Fund has carved its role in the educational landscape through passion, research, and community.

~ *Alex Dello Buono*

## I. The Origins: PATHS and PRISM

The history of Philadelphia Education Fund is tied to the triumphs and weaknesses within the School District of Philadelphia. To understand the depth of the issues that confronted the District and the Ed Fund, one must analyze the desegregation reform that occurred throughout the city's public schools. Despite *Brown v. Board of Education's* passage in 1954, society did not follow suit for years. It took Philadelphia more than five years to develop and implement a non-discrimination policy. However, de facto segregation still caused the composition of many schools to be almost solely African American. In 1963, the Board of Education pressed that the District lines be redrawn to create more diversity and force desegregation regardless of neighborhood. Such plans were met with controversy, obstacles, and politically motivated actions which led the Pennsylvania Human Relations Committee to file a discrimination suit against the Philadelphia School Board. This lawsuit was in limbo for several years until Constance Clayton was named the Superintendent of the District in 1982. She came in prepared to face the desegregation issue that still beset the School District of Philadelphia. Clayton, the first African American and woman to hold the superintendent office, immediately went to work by asking the Human Relations Committee to withdraw its suit by offering up a modified desegregation plan, one that relied on voluntary action from the schools and the community. The effort was met with approval, except in some neighborhoods where white families, who already disdained the city's schools, fled to the suburbs. "When Clayton became the superintendent in 1982 the reputation of the School District had sunk to a very low level," and it was at this time that outside organizations rose to meet the challenges that faced one of America's largest and historic cities. It was in this chaotic backdrop that the Philadelphia Education Fund was founded.

The conception of local education funds began during the 1980s. Education funds were "tax-exempt, nonprofit, community-based organizations that work[ed] to improve student achievement for all children attending public schools," and exemplified the need for outside parties to act as agents of change for economically deprived urban school districts. Starting in 1983, local education funds, under the overarching organizational umbrella of the Public Education Network (PEN), grew in both size and influence thanks to contributions from the Ford Foundation. Through financial growth and a national partnership with PEN, local education funds provided "advocacy, philanthropy, and civic activism to leverage powerful change in their school systems and communities." The impact of local education funds is outlined in Elizabeth Useem's 1999 book "From the Margins to the Center of School Reform: A Look at the Work of Local Education Funds in Seventeen Communities." Useem's book included Philadelphia Education Fund where she worked as Director of Research and Evaluation.

The Philadelphia Education Fund can trace its history to 1984 when two local education funds in Philadelphia began to focus on providing teachers with the resources they needed to affect change within the city. Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching Humanities in Schools (PATHS) and Philadelphia Renaissance in Science and Mathematics (PRISM) represented a union between the city's businesses, universities, school district, and community to foster change necessitated by law. The Philadelphia Partnership for Education, forged by the efforts by PATHS/PRISM, began its mission "to improve the education of Philadelphia area schoolchildren." Superintendent Constance Clayton requested the development of this organization to help change schools in the city during the early period of her tenure as Superintendent. The impetus for this effort was to mitigate the struggles caused by limited budgets and lack of educational mobilization in the District.

During the foundation of PATHS/PRISM, the efforts of the Ed Fund (then called Philadelphia Partnership for Education) were initially focused on summer institutes, colloquia, small grants, and workshops. PATHS/PRISM firmly believed that teachers could be the best agents of change within schools. Opportunities created by PATHS/PRISM for teachers during the 1980s included scholarly study and research, collegial discourse, exploration of local educational resources, curriculum reform, and support for innovative teacher practices. From PATHS/PRISM's creation in 1984, it had developed more than thirty programs, some multi-year efforts that covered nearly all disciplines such as history, literature, mathematics, and science. The importance of PATHS/PRISM from 1985 well into the 1990s cannot be exaggerated since the professional development that was provided through the Education Fund was one of the only resources for teachers, an opportunity for educators that was non-existent before PATHS/PRISM. The School District, during the early years of education funds, was desperate. Problems with severely limited budgets left teachers devoid of resources and assistance. As such, the stress on the District was immense during the beginning of Clayton's tenure. PATHS/PRISM was able to help ease this burden by working closely with the District and its employees. The District had to make up a deficit of \$60 million to be financial stable in 1984. These led to budget cuts that marginalized teachers and principals and the elimination of thousands of district jobs concurrent with the enrollment of an additional 5,000 students per year, many non-English speaking. District employee faced a lack of job security, underemployment, and the daunting task of teaching a population that was increasingly below the poverty line. PATHS/PRISM's emergence along with Clayton's efforts helped save a district that many believed was on the verge of collapse.

Previously, professional workshops for teachers, opportunities for in-classroom grants, and scholarly research were not available for educators. The absence of these necessary resources left the School District without the faculty base to confront the restricted budgets

and the inequalities that existed. PATHS/PRISM's early work with teachers, starting with summer institutes in 1985, provided the necessary training that many District employees need to teach using modern pedagogy. PATHS/PRISM now supported educators that once had zero resources in an entirely unprecedented manner. PATHS/PRISM had begun a legacy of being a premier third-party organization that aided the School District by utilizing donor and District money in efficient and meaningful ways. Fundraising efforts by PATHS/PRISM made it clear that the organization could find and use money in ways the School District of Philadelphia could not. From 1984 until 1990, the Ed Fund had financial support from an eclectic group of donors: national and local, public and private.

PATHS/PRISM was supported by grants and contracts from a variety of funders at this time including: the American Association for the Advancement of Science, ARCO Chemical Company, Bell of Pennsylvania, Chevron USA, CIGNA, the Committee to Support Philadelphia Public Schools, Exxon Education Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Greater Philadelphia First Corporation, IBM Corporation, Merck Sharp & Dohme, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Geography Society, the National Science Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, PSFS, the Rockefeller Foundation, the School District of Philadelphia, SmithKline, and Sun Company.

PATHS/PRISM had begun to form a precedent for the future by being a broker between the District, the community, and the private sector. As a neutral party whose goal was to advance the educational experience for Philadelphia students, PATHS/PRISM began framing the vision and missionary goals of the Ed Fund for decades to come. Accessing much-needed reservoirs of funds, the Ed Fund was able to assist the District during desperate times. Additionally, PATHS/PRISM set other precedents that go beyond the ability to negotiate funds and provide professional development. During the 1980s, the Ed Fund had already started to become a leader of ideas. The Ed Fund, upon the creation of its first teacher workshops, showed signs that its educational practices and thoughts on pedagogy were ahead of the curve. Early programs created by PATHS/PRISM were "based on the belief that teaching and learning are active processes of engagement with ideas, material resources, and people, past and present, in the classroom and in community." The constructivist approach, based heavily on the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and others such as Lev Vygotsky, would be the guiding paradigm for PATHS/PRISM's professional development. Teachers who participated in PATHS/PRISM's programs experienced "hands-on" activities involving original historical sources, lab experiments, and literary works. The inquiry-based approach to teaching was a philosophy embraced by PATHS/PRISM decades before the spread of similar pedagogical thought by initiatives such as Common Core in 2010.

However, in the 1980s “existing school structures, curricula, assessment procedures, and instructional models [made] it difficult for teachers to embrace inquiry-based pedagogy,” which was revealed in “An Evaluation of PATHS/PRISM: The Philadelphia Partnership for Education.” The 1990 evaluation of the PATHS/PRISM’s early work with talent development was conducted by the Institute for Literacy Studies and revealed obstacles as well as victories for an education fund still in its infancy. The Ed Fund was acknowledged for its sophisticated and inquiry-based paradigm, but that same progressivism was met with resistance from “standardized curriculum, citywide testing, and marking guidelines [that] presented contradictions to the more process-oriented and in-depth approach of PATHS/PRISM.” The evaluative report (co-written by a future employee of the Ed Fund, Jolley Christman, Ph.D.) found that teachers, principals and whole schools who were more open to the inquiry-based philosophy and who already had shared beliefs on pedagogy received incredibly rewarding experiences with PATHS/PRISM. Debra Weiner, a longtime education activist, and former district employee described the programs from this era as “the best and only high quality professional development,” available for teachers in the school district. With concern to effective talent development for educators, PATHS/PRISM stood alone in aiding the school district by creating an active faculty coalition. By 1990 a total of over 5,000 teachers had already participated in the Ed Fund’s programs.

After initial success in its talent development efforts, PATHS/PRISM began to expand its vision to whole-school reform. Through its “experience with programs for individual teachers, PATHS/PRISM has learned that educational change is more likely to occur when teams of educators from a school work collaboratively on a project,” this learning would lead to a new era and serve as a pre-cursor to the Philadelphia Education Fund. Facing an urban population that shared increasingly less cultural ties to the pre-existing social studies curriculum, PATHS/PRISM started a new initiative to rewrite and apply relevant history courses to the School District of Philadelphia. A new world history curriculum was piloted at numerous schools across the district; one that was more engaging to a population often neglected or underrepresented in history. The pilot program saw the implementation and data collection of a revised theme-based curriculum. Other decisions were also made to align closer with PATHS/PRISM’s inquiry-based approach, such as suspending citywide testing for the world history pilot schools. The school district agreed with PATHS/PRISM’s approach and “recognized the necessity of minimizing incoherence in the development stages of an experiment,” thus allowing the Ed Fund to help teachers apply new pedagogy without being vulnerable to mandated testing. This development could not have been possible if not for the strong bond that existed between PATHS/PRISM and the School District of Philadelphia. A strategic planning document from 1991 noted that PATHS/PRISM gave “partnership, a rich and comprehensive definition,” because of the group’s ability to work in close concert with Constance Clayton. In fact, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1993 published an article written by

the acclaimed educational journalist, Dale Mezzacappa that summarized the tenure of Superintendent Clayton and mentioned the impact of PATHS/PRISM. The Inquirer wrote, “much-needed school repairs were made...notably PATHS/PRISM worked with teachers on projects such as a new theme-based world history curriculum.”

Growing its presence in schools and specifically, in the classroom, PATHS/PRISM was expanding in both scope and impact. The Cluster Initiative, started in 1990, helped the Ed Fund to realize its vital connection between “horizontal” programs that reinvigorate educators (in many ways the Ed Fund’s original goals) and “vertical” programs that worked to revitalize whole schools through school-based decision making. The Cluster Initiative allowed PATHS/PRISM to be consistently present and thus influential in many schools throughout the District. A document entitled, “PATHS/PRISM: The Philadelphia Partnership for Education Strategic Planning Process” from 1991, provides great insight into the uncertainty the organization had about the growing focus of its programs:

- ❖ Who are PATHS/PRISM’s constituents?
- ❖ To what extent should whole-school outcomes be the focus of our programs?
- ❖ Should we attempt to use our experience and resources to assist in shaping local and state policies and agendas which impact on the teachers and students of the School District of Philadelphia?

These questions are considered at the turn of the decade and reflect the Ed Fund’s ambition to expand its role and broaden its vision. Defining moments like that of 1991 would propel the Ed Fund into a new era that would involve closer ties with the District, efforts on influencing educational policy, and a merger that would create the Philadelphia Education Fund.

## II. Continued Growth and Whole School Reform

The 1990s brought new strength and focus to PATHS/PRISM, a growing non-profit corporation under the auspices of the School District of Philadelphia and the Committee to Support the Philadelphia Public Schools. By the end of 1991, PATHS/PRISM had become the nation's largest public/private educational partnership based on its annual budget, which in 1990 was more than \$3.5 million. PATHS/PRISM, chaired by Dr. Mary Patterson McPherson, was made up of a diverse staff that included representation from local universities, the School District, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and other cultural/scientific institutions. With increased annual budgets through the support of large funders such as the Pews Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Philadelphia School District, PATHS/PRISM was growing beyond talent development. At the request of Superintendent Clayton, the Ed Fund became increasingly more responsible for vital programs within the district such as the Cluster Initiative, which eventually included 25 elementary and middle schools in the District. The staff within the clusters was providing whole-school renewal through programs for teachers, curriculum changes, and significant grant projects. By the end of 1991, PATHS/PRISM estimated that 9,000 teachers had participated in at least one of its programs. The Cluster Initiative proved only to be the beginning of PATHS/PRISM's whole-school reform because in 1991 Constance Clayton asked PATHS/PRISM not only to "maintain a range of curriculum and instruction enhancement K-12," but also to "[identify] the renewal/restructuring of middle schools as a primary focus." Middle schools became an increasingly central place for reform within the District. Under the invitation of Superintendent Clayton, PATHS/PRISM would become a thought leader on the importance and administration of middle grades. Clayton attended a board meeting in July of 1992 and commented "that the partnership between PATHS/PRISM and the School District of Philadelphia has been a partnership of respect" and expressed, that "the School District is in a time of transition. The real challenge for PATHS/PRISM now is to work with whole-school programs." Clayton's need for outside assistance and PATHS/PRISM's commitment to meaningful reform resulted in an expanding role of the organization.

A 1991 proposal to the Pew Charitable Trusts revealed an increase in funding by PATHS/PRISM but also the sharpening of the organization's focus and dedication to research-based change. Projects such as restructuring the middle schools, creation of communities of learners, and curriculum development were all grounded in original research done by members of PATHS/PRISM such as Betsey Useem or progressive national research such as: Howard Gardner at Harvard Project Zero, Theodore Sizer of the Coalition of Essential Schools, efforts of the Educational Testing Service, and Lauren Resnick at the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. PATHS/PRISM had begun acting as an

authority on important paradigm shifts for the District. PATHS/PRISM programs encouraged students' active engagement in performance tasks, new writing assessments, and thematic-based world history courses. The research department of PATHS/PRISM expanded its unique efforts by working with Harvard PACE (Performance Assessment Collaborative for Education) under Dennie Wolf to study the classrooms of two World History projects. Original research developed from PATHS/PRISM would again set a precedent that the Ed Fund would actively engage in its own studies such as identifying important characteristics that appear in middle grades such as high absentee rates and failing grades. Insight into literacy, middle grades, learning communities, and even middle school indicators that a student is at high risk of dropping out were all in early development during the start of the 1990s. Ideas such as these would continue to grow and cement to become regular programs in the future Philadelphia Education Fund.

With stable funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts that was partially matched by the School District, PATHS/PRISM developed three primary goals for the 1992 year: middle school reform, elementary school reform, and enhancement of teaching/learning K-12. The plans were extremely comprehensive as outlined in the Strategic Planning document of that year. Each initiative started with an understanding of the context of a situation by gathering baseline data, followed by determining best practices for each school, and then implementing various strategies. PATHS/PRISM became forceful in its belief for whole-school reform and educators collaborating through a multitude of facets. The definitive language used by PATHS/PRISM substantiates its goals:

“An effective school breaks down the isolation of teachers, staff, and students; and involves students, parents, and the community in the life of the school. Ultimately, an effective school is concerned with all students--not just some--and is dedicated to challenging and supporting them to become productive citizens and life-long learners.”

The collaborative approach to school reform would not only empower and professionalize teachers, but rhetoric such as this would reverberate throughout the Ed Fund through the present-day. The initiatives were bold, and the Ed Fund needed ways to assess its programs after implementation. A 1993 position paper by Michael Smith, a former director of PATHS/PRISM, weighs in on the structure of the organization and begins to define its role in the educational landscape. Smith notes the range and scope of programs offered by PATHS/PRISM in 1992 alone which included:

The World History Project, the Writing Project, the Quazar Project, the Comprehensive Regional Center for Minorities, Good Books for Great Kids, Chem-Com, Grants for Teachers and Schools, the Algebra Project, the Diversity Partnership, Playing with Math, Light Heat and Motion, Learning Through the Arts, Science Resource Leaders, and the Middle School Initiative.

In just one more year, PATHS/PRISM had already reached 4,200 more teachers in staff development programs. Smith also comments on the “Inside/Outside” relationship the Ed Fund has with the School District, a relationship status that is still mentioned today. The Ed Fund manages to keep a “balance in which it is supportive of The School District and closely coordinates its programs with appropriate regional and central offices, yet is sufficiently independent to be able to design programs, seek funding, and support teacher and school renewal without being constrained by the bureaucracy of a large district.” The balance described by Smith is responsible for much of Ed Fund’s success during its history. PATHS/PRISM’s ability to work directly with Clayton while maintaining its own workspace and creative processes lend itself to the strength of the organization.

Success can be quantified as seen in “Research Policy Perspectives” published by the Philadelphia Partnership for Education: PATHS/PRISM. Articles such as the one described were written by the organization and go into detail about program set-up, application, and results. Said conclusions display hard numbers as well as discussion sections that dissect the strengths and weaknesses of PATHS/PRISM’s programs. The Algebra Project, which was designed to expose students to algebraic problems earlier in their education, showed increased numbers in advanced math by a variance of 23.4%. Other programs indicated early signs of success. The School Renewal Initiatives spurred systematic change in the pilot Elementary Schools, and while the Middle Schools showed mixed results, participants expressed, “the presence of an outside facilitating organization, in this case, PATHS/PRISM, was essential,” to changing staff and curriculum culture. In addition to the support for STEM courses, PATHS/PRISM also offered the After-School Arts program that hoped to enrich the curriculum and encourage parent involvement in schools. Debbie Weiner, a consultant for the School District, described the advocacy work of the Art Rising program that would emerge from this as a way to get the schools “to take art seriously.” Evaluations of the programs were also coupled with reflections on the role of Local Education Funds known as LEFs. LEFs were set up to be “quick-moving, flexible, and entrepreneurial with small staffs focused on raising additional public and private dollars and overseeing a range of reform-oriented programs,” but this role was expanding. The “Research Policy Perspectives” headlined an article on the redirection of Public Education Funds noting that “while not abandoning programs such as mini grants to teachers...the education funds have expanded their work to include major pilot efforts involving whole

schools or clusters of schools as well as initiatives whose object is to deal directly with thorny district-wide barriers to reform.” PATHS/PRISM in 1994, reflective of the organization’s growth in the past ten years, concluded that it had successfully moved onto new cluster and even policy terrain. The following year would bring even greater change and growth to the still relatively young PATHS/PRISM with a merger that would rename and strengthen the organization.

### III. Merger: The Creation of the Philadelphia Education Fund

1994 brought about a great deal of change for the Philadelphia educational landscape. For starters, Constance Clayton retired as superintendent after serving for 11 years; the average tenure for big-city superintendents is a little over two years. The Philadelphia School Board then hired David Hornbeck, a fervent educational advocate as evidenced from his defense of poor districts when he was head of the Maryland Department of Education. Hornbeck came into the role of superintendent with a fiery passion for advocating for change and backed with a plan. Hornbeck's 10-point plan entitled "Children Achieving" would persuade the Ed Fund, an organization that had to make some serious changes as well.

During the mid-1990s there was a push for consolidation of many non-profit organizations that shared similar missions, especially local education funds. While PATHS and PRISM had already merged previously to form the Philadelphia Partnership for Education, there existed another organization that overlapped with PATHS/PRISM often because of its connection to the School District of Philadelphia. This group was the Philadelphia School's Collaborative, a large educational reform group founded in 1988. Unlike PATHS/PRISM, a tax-exempt 501(c) organization, the Philadelphia School's Collaborative had public status and existed within the School District of Philadelphia, with significant funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts. Robert Schwartz, the director of the education grant making for Pew, held tremendous influence when it came to the financing of Philadelphia public education in the 1990s and advocated for consolidation of educational reform groups. Under pressure from Robert Schwartz and Superintendent Hornbeck, PATHS/PRISM merged with the Philadelphia School's Collaborative to form the Philadelphia Education Fund.

The Philadelphia Education Fund (abbreviated to PEF during the 1990's, but later shortened to the Ed Fund) became the third largest of 53 public education funds in the United States. The Philadelphia School's Collaborative moved its resources and employees to the current location of the Ed Fund, the United Way Building on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, where PATHS/PRISM was already situated. Betsey Useem, the Senior Fellow with responsibilities for research and evaluation, described the union, "mergers are about boxes, there was a lot of boxes." With an increased employee force and larger budget, the newly created Philadelphia Education Fund was prepared to skate onto the educational scene during a transitional stage for the District. Superintendent Hornbeck and Robert Schwartz worked with the Ed Fund to find the first executive director of the recently created organization. Warren Simmons was tapped for the position. A former employee of the Annie E. Casey Foundation where he served as Director for Baltimore Relations, Simmons had worked in a

variety of educational settings. His previous experience involved improving “educational outcomes for disadvantaged youth and adults and [promoting] school reform.” Not only did Simmons have a background of fulfilling a mission similar to the Ed Fund’s, but he was also able to work in close concert with the District. Simmons was part of Superintendent Hornbeck’s inner cabinet and was thus able to provide insight on policy while also finding contracts for the Ed Fund. The “inside/outside” relationship was stronger than ever as the Ed Fund moved into a new era, allowing it to begin planning what programs would evolve and which new initiatives could be created.

The successful programs funded by PATHS/PRISM were retained by the Philadelphia Education Fund. The College Access Program (CAP), an initiative from 1990, became a vital program of the Ed Fund. College Access Centers, located in Center City, worked with 13 high schools and nine feeder middle schools with support from the North Philadelphia Community Compact. CAP focused on promoting active collaboration among schools, colleges, community organizations, and families in support of improving student access to and success in postsecondary education. The Philadelphia Scholars Fund, a division of CAP that was conceived in 1990 was also retained through the merger to the present. At this point, the Scholars Program would assist 318 students, while the College Access Program had touched nearly 30,000 students just by 1995. Another program, dating back to PATHS/PRISM, was the Education First Compact. The Education First Compact represents a “diverse group of education stakeholders committed to improving public education in Philadelphia. The Compact’s meetings focused on helping stakeholders use their social, intellectual, and political capital to leverage school improvement.” Programs such as CAP and the Compact represent values taken from PATHS/PRISM and follow the mission of the Ed Fund, so it is no surprise they are both still intact today.

While the best of the old was preserved, many new initiatives were introduced within the first year of the Philadelphia Education Fund. Hornbeck’s 10-point plan as part of Children Achieving would place the Ed Fund at the center of more systemic change within the District, as whole school reform was favored over the “pockets of excellence” that PATHS/PRISM fostered. “A Place at the Table: The Changing Role of Urban Public Education Funds” written by Betsey Useem and Ruth Curran Nield capture the shift that occurred in 1995. While Constance Clayton worked closely with PATHS/PRISM, Simmons’ position in Hornbeck’s cabinet coupled with funders’ preference to donate to private education funds, which they viewed as more mobile and efficient, propelled the Ed Fund to the forefront of whole-school reform as part of Hornbeck’s Children Achieving. Useem discussed the transition: “David Hornbeck was in the process of planning sweeping systemic reforms designed to remove many of the existing structural barriers to whole-school renewal. These changes will bring the

work of the Philadelphia Education Fund into closer alignment with the goals of the district.” The article discussing the changing role mentioned the term “policy player” as the Ed Fund moved from being a contractual entity to have a place at the table. It was at this time the Philadelphia Education Fund published its first research paper that was presented at the Annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco. The paper, entitled “Urban Teacher Curriculum Networks and Systemic Change,” was a groundbreaking look into the benefits of teacher collaboration. Actual instructors remarked that ideas like common planning time and more idea exchange between educators produced positive change within the whole school and not just the classroom. This publication was just the beginning of published research that discusses educational outcomes of the Ed Fund’s programs; many more initiatives were in effect that would come to fruition later such as restructuring high schools, students’ perspective on middle schools, and the power of libraries. The highlights of the year were summarized in the Philadelphia Education Fund’s first annual report posted in *The Daily News*. The report featured a Q&A with Executive Director, Warren Simmons, and showed the numerous programs the Ed Fund oversaw with donor contributions. The report laid out all of the programs along with funding sources as well as the total budget and expenditures, which had risen to \$8.2 million. The Philadelphia Education Fund was situated to make a big difference within the District, especially with huge reform movements beginning to take shape under Hornbeck’s Children Achieving.

Children Achieving was Hornbeck’s master plan to go further than Clayton had ever gone; it was even coined as Hornbeck’s “ten commandments.” The reform plan was funded by a whopping \$100 million budget raised mostly by the Annenberg Foundation, which contributed \$50 million as part of its Challenge Grant. The money was matched by local foundations as well including William Penn and the Pew Charitable Trusts to reach the total of \$100 million. The funding went to many initiatives that the Philadelphia Education Fund implemented or collaborated on with organizations like AmeriCorps or the Philadelphia School District. At this time, the District’s work for Children Achieving overlapped substantially with the whole school reform that the Ed Fund was already engaging in during the last years of PATHS/PRISM. One significant systemic change included breaking down the high schools into schools within schools known as charter schools (a misnomer today) or small learning communities. The Ed Fund did research into small learning communities and found statistically significant improvements when students were in smaller schools that could better cater to their needs. Continuation of the middle school renewal was also in full effect during the first year of PEF, due in part to assessments that showed mixed results. The next year, PEF published the “Middle School Plan for Content Literacy,” which was distributed by the District with a goal of six strategies for school-wide success. This research was followed by others, and in 1996, Ed Fund employees, Jolley Christman and Pat Macpherson released a case study entitled “The Five School Study: Restructuring Philadelphia’s Comprehensive High Schools.”

The study identified considerable problems within the District, including a noteworthy finding that less than half of 9th graders moved to 10th grade. After that, PEF promoted the benefits of small learning communities, focus on middle grades, and child-centered reform. The results displayed quantitative improvement, not across the board, but a majority of the schools in the case study were in the midst of school-wide change. Jolley Christman commented that the Ed Fund was the “grease and the glue” to Hornbeck’s plan because the organization was driving quality reform. This achievement was a consequence of the well-above average budget that the Ed Fund was able to access from 1995-1998; the Annenberg Challenge was the peak of financial influx for the non-profit, leading to what Christman described as “innovative and creative growth.” Initiatives from this era would set the course for many programs that the Ed Fund still runs today. However, being so involved in the Children Achieving plan left the Ed Fund doubtful on its “inside/outside” status. Useem commented that “Hornbeck was a motivated person; he had the reform energy,” so while the programs Ed Fund ran were on a much larger scale, the organization did lose some autonomy.

1997 was the most prolific for published reports by the Ed Fund as many of its programs or longitudinal studies reached completion and were thus available for analysis. Two major contributions to the education field came in the form of “Teacher Networks” and “Library Power.” The former had been studied since 1994, and after three years Ed Fund researchers: Elizabeth Useem, James Culbertson, and Judy Buchanan, were able to publish findings that were ahead of the curve. The teacher networks of interest ranged in importance and scope, but the influence of teacher involvement in professional settings outside of work that furthered their career proved to be invaluable. Teachers in these networks proved later to be leaders in the educational community, eventually becoming principals and even superintendents in other districts of Greater Philadelphia. Interest in teacher networks continues even into the present with current members nurturing and reviewing the influence of teacher networks. The other major study from 1997 includes the power of school libraries. After receiving funding from the Ed Fund to pursue the “library initiative,” many schools showed significant strides in furthering academia and literacy within their walls. The study showed that with appropriately trained staff and resource allocation, improvement in school libraries is very conceivable.

1998 brought continued growth to the Philadelphia Education Fund, but also change to the still young organization. Warren Simmons left the Philadelphia Education Fund and was replaced by educational veteran, Nancy McGinley. Taking control of the Ed Fund, McGinley was knowledgeable of Philadelphia schools, the District, and the entire educational landscape. She came from a family of educators, and after working in schools and for the District she was ready to make a broader impact as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ed Fund. McGinley

leveraged her District experience to join Hornbeck’s inner cabinet, enhancing her ability to collaborate on policy and continue the close relationship between the District and the Ed Fund. One such example was the 1999 publication entitled “Reports on Recruitment, Hiring, and Induction of Teachers in the School District of Philadelphia,” this qualitative study was based on numerous interviews with new teachers in the District. The results were revealing including the inefficient, degrading, and elementary approach to hiring instructors. Interviews also brought to attention rooms without air conditioning, long hours, inappropriate questions, and excessive bureaucracy. The conclusion of this study would later change the process through which teachers are hired for the District, a process that continues to receive attention.

## IV. Change in the New Millennial

The turn of the century brought an explosion of changes, innovation, and technological advancements. The new millennium came with a change of arms in the School District of Philadelphia and an overall feeling of uneasiness within the education system in the area. The Annenberg Challenge funds were necessary to propel Hornbeck's Children Achieving Plan; however, the state of Pennsylvania had allocated less money than Hornbeck needed to complete his idealistic goals for the District. Disgruntled by Harrisburg, Hornbeck went on the offensive which led to an embattled exchange between him and state lawmakers. Mayor John F. Street tried to mediate the intense animosity that Hornbeck held towards the State, which he viewed as withholding vital funds to the District, despite rising test scores and signs of overall improvement. The tension finally climaxed in David Hornbeck accusing Pennsylvania state lawmakers of racist agendas that turn a blind-eye to minority children in the inner-city. Hornbeck would continue his job until August 15th of 2000, but the antipathy between the District and Harrisburg would need time to heal. As previously mentioned, the Philadelphia Education Fund's success is in many ways tied to the District, with the years 1995 through 2000 marking the closest relationship between the two entities. Hornbeck's exit brought uncertainty for both the District and the Ed Fund. The School District had interim Chief Academic and Executive Officers from 2000 until 2002, positions held by Deidre Farmbry and Paul R. Goldsmith. The District was at a crossroads with the whole nation questioning the city's ability to fund and provide the necessary education to its youth.

After 2000, the Philadelphia Education Fund could do little to help a District that many believed to be in sharp decline. The Ed Fund continued to trudge along, releasing more research reports and investing in the incubating of teacher development with the goal of "Placing a high qualified teacher in every Philadelphia classroom." 2001 and 2002 marked the release of two in-depth reports on "Teacher Staffing in the School District of Philadelphia," reports which examined obstacles that prevented quality teachers from being attracted to Philadelphia schools as well as problems with low teacher turnover rate. Based on these findings, the Philadelphia Education Fund took the initiative to increase the number of competent teachers in the District. Reform in the hiring process from 1999 in combination with research into turnover and recruitment practices brought higher quality instructors into the classroom. Simultaneously, the Ed Fund was publishing conclusions from its study: "Year Three of Talent Development High School Initiative in Philadelphia: Results from Five Schools." The results showed student gains in Algebra I, Science, and English despite dropping scores in other parts of the District with more limited budgets.

While optimism remained in the District and the Ed Fund, several factors created new obstacles for the organization. In 2002, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) under President George W. Bush saw major shifts in the allocation of funds and dynamics in the educational system this time directed from the federal level. While the federal government agreed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan effort to improve education, the risk of underachieving created new challenges for the District and the Ed Fund. Intense pressure to meet adequate yearly progress caused schools to adjust curriculum in order to pass national exams that weighed on improvement. Further, schools that did not meet the minimum level of proficiency requested by NCLB would be reprimanded on the national platform and risk scrutiny from the state and federal governments. For the School District of Philadelphia, under interim command for two years, achieving the test scores set by NCLB presented a seemingly insurmountable challenge.

It was in this challenging time that the city of Philadelphia welcomed a new superintendent, welcoming Paul Vallas, to take control of a District in decline. Vallas presided over one of the largest educational experiments in history by privatizing management and schools within the District, believing that the private sector could save the city's schools. Public perception showed that Vallas' initiative was polarizing and risky and many investors saw less opportunity in the District. Instead of private businesses and foundations providing grant support to the Ed Fund for use in the Philadelphia School District, some companies believed they could run better schools and host better administration than the District. Vallas trusted this judgment and allowed parts of the District to be privatized, thus creating the incubation of charter schools in Philadelphia, which have continued to grow since 2002. Several former District employees have commented on Vallas' devotion to progress, an affinity that often made him sideline outside organizations such as the Ed Fund. The relationship between the District and the Ed Fund was not as strong under Vallas, unlike under Clayton and Hornbeck who kept CEOs of the Ed Fund on their cabinets like Simmons and McGinley. The "inside-outside" relationship that the Ed Fund once used as leverage within the District was shifted to Vallas with his "progressive energy." The energy for change seemed to have moved as the great private school experiment began in Philadelphia at the same time NCLB standards created by the state of Pennsylvania loomed over the District.

In 2002 the privatization project began under Vallas with 40 schools turning to for-profits, nonprofits, and universities for administration. The project garnished mixed feelings from many sources as critics decried the last resort business approach - ultimately, Vallas was named CEO of the District. The Philadelphia Education Fund remained neutral and was not involved in the District's privatization efforts. In fact, the Ed Fund would produce more compelling research during this time as well as further incubate its own initiatives within the

existing District schools. In the winter 2002 copy of *Benchmarks* Useem and Robert Balfanz write about the comprehensive District reform, calling it “Philadelphia’s Grand Experiment.” In this Useem and Balfanz outline the efforts that would continue within the already established whole-school reform schools while capturing the feeling of doubtfulness and optimism that existed at the Philadelphia School District and the Ed Fund.

## V. Philadelphia Education Fund into the Present

The Philadelphia Education Fund has shifted focus and redefined its role in the District during the last ten years. In October of 2004, Carol Fixman became the Executive Director of the Ed Fund. Fixman, unlike her two predecessors, was less connected to the District's administration. This transition, in conjunction with the end of the Annenberg Challenge funds, caused the Ed Fund to once again adjust to a changing educational landscape. Fixman created two important initiatives: the Philadelphia Math and Science Coalition (funded by the National Public Education Network as well as Toyota), and Arts Rising, established in 2005. Decreased funding and marginalization from the District meant more autonomy for the Ed Fund, and after 2005, the organization began to create more original research and drive reform at a policy level. The end of 2004 marked the last year for the inquiry into Early Warning Indicators with co-researcher, Johns Hopkins. Subsequently, the Ed Fund began the Early Warning Response System. The system identified factors that occurred at critical years in a child's education; the highly original tracking system allowed teachers to expound on at-risk students and use a model to get them back on track towards graduation. This model has been adopted by numerous school districts and delivered in presentations by the Ed Fund and Johns Hopkins. The tenacity of the Ed Fund allowed the last ten years, during which it had less support from major foundations like Annenberg and Pew, to still bring about new programs and reform to Philadelphia.

From 2006 through 2009 the Ed Fund developed, implemented, and assessed its programs to bring a host of reforms. The focus of the Ed Fund broadened from the talent development that it started with twenty years prior. The program, CORE Philly, grew in scope, from initially providing educational resources to eligible college students; it grew into a scholarship and award process for deserving teens. Additionally, Graduate! Philadelphia partnered with the already existing College Access Program in 2007 to help students get into college. Continuing its higher education assistance, in 2009, the Ed Fund developed the Philadelphia Postsecondary Success Program (PPSP), a collaborative initiative designed to increase the number of low-income and first-generation public high school students who enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. PPSP was initially supported by a five-year grant from the Citi Foundation to launch a national Postsecondary Success Program, working with three local education funds in Philadelphia, Miami, and San Francisco. PPSP has remained successful, and the Ed Fund tracks students who entered the program and provides supports while they are in high school and college to help them acclimate to the culture and demands of institutions of higher learning. Currently, the Ed Fund has several employees devoted to helping youth attend colleges while also providing resources to help reduce attrition from first-year to sophomore year and beyond.

Philadelphia Education Fund also supported teachers during this time, programs that were widely successful and continue to the present. The Philadelphia Teacher Residency Program helped to accomplish the mission of placing highly competent instructors in each classroom. For this, the Ed Fund teamed with local colleges and universities such as Temple and Arcadia to create a better dialogue between what schools needs are and the teaching process going on in the college education programs. The Ed Fund supports its own efforts like the Teacher Residency, a byproduct of and cause of other initiatives like the Reduced Class Size Balanced Literacy Program, teacher networks, Middle Grades Matter, Curriculum framework and core curriculum training, Math/Science Coalition, and Student Teacher Pipeline to the Future. Like the numerous programs that aided college-seeking students, Ed Fund's contributions towards teacher residency are made through a multitude of facets.

From 2010-2015, the Ed Fund solidified many of its programs and applied more effort and funds to its successful initiatives. Programs like CAP, PPSP, Early Warning Response System, and Diplomas Now continue to thrive and provide needed support in the District. In its recent history, the Ed Fund has even started looking to the past to create something new, a perfect example of the ability to learn from its organization's successes and readiness to evolve in an increasingly digital age. The greatest example lies in the Teacher Network research and incubation that is making great strides in 2016. Ed Fund employees, Daniel Schiff, Ami Patel-Hopkins, and Liza Herzog, have research available in the *Urban Education Journal* under the Penn School of Education into Teacher Networks in Philadelphia: Landscape, Engagement, and Value. These works showed the importance of teachers branching out beyond their classrooms to better train and professionalize instructors. In fact, the Ed Fund helped create or incubate over twenty teacher network organizations for instructors all over the city. These examples indicate the tremendous influence of the Ed Fund. In addition to its work on teacher development and incubation, the Ed Fund conducted a 10-year longitudinal study on teacher networks and published results in 2015.

While the District of Philadelphia has experienced times of uncertainty, the Philadelphia Education Fund has been a consistent partner and resource to the children and teachers of the city. From changing relationships with the School District administration to a fluctuating budget, the Ed Fund has stayed true to its mission to support the students of Philadelphia by providing resources for them that the District simply could not provide. Instructors have also expressed praise and admiration for the work of the Philadelphia Education Fund for its assistance through grants as well as valuable talent development. How much of an effect did the Philadelphia Education Fund have on the city's educational landscape? One employee from the Ed Fund said, "it is very hard to quantify," because of the numerous students that

have been touched or reinvigorated instructors whose gratitude cannot be captured in a spreadsheet. However, the Ed Fund has invaluabley aided the educational pursuits of tens of thousands of students and thousands of teachers. The Philadelphia Education Fund is a staple non-profit in the city of Philadelphia whose role in uplifting the students and teachers of the area is unparalleled.

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