



# PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION of TEACHERS

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**CC: GOVERNOR TOM WOLF**  
**SECRETARY OF EDUCATION PEDRO RIVERA**  
**FROM: JERRY JORDAN, PRESIDENT, PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**  
**RE: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ON OPPOSITION TO SB751**  
**JUNE 19, 2019**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry', is located to the right of the header text.

In addition to the specific concerns outlined in our June 14<sup>th</sup> policy memo as well as in our June 13<sup>th</sup> letter to the Philadelphia delegation, we want to reiterate our significant and specific concerns as related to SB 751.

To be clear: our concerns regarding SB751 are not merely process based. While the process was extraordinarily flawed, ultimately, the legislation is our focus. Our concerns outlined in our June 14<sup>th</sup> memo remain, and after a review of “test scenarios” for the implementation of SB751, we have identified additional objections.

***Quite simply, the legislation proposed in SB751 does not move the needle for a significant number of educators.***

- Out of 348 sample scenarios provided, we note the following:
  - Merely 16 educators (4.59%) saw an improvement in their rating.
  - Conversely, 40 educators (11.49%) saw a decrease in their rating.
  - For 84% of educators, the “test runs” yielded the same rating results.

***Further, the “challenge multiplier” is deeply flawed and unproven.***

Despite the implementation of a “challenge multiplier” which appears designed to address issues of student poverty, the multiplier yields very little shift in individual teachers’ scores. The multiplier has its largest impact on the overall ratings of buildings, as opposed to individual teachers’ ratings.

*Thus, the utilization of the “challenge multiplier” is inherently flawed. If the purpose of such a multiplier is intended as a recognition of the effect of poverty on a child’s learning, then the fact that it yields a significant shift in school scores but not in teacher scores is indicative of the still too significant weight assigned to disproven standardized test scores and PVAAS data for individual teachers.*

Additionally, while perhaps well-intentioned, the “challenge multiplier” begs the question of how we appear to be codifying the narrative of failing students, educators, and

communities. The evaluation of poverty as having a truly significant role in our children's education is not to be discounted. However, to simply adopt a highly complex figure with little explanation of how it was designed is problematic.

Again, though perhaps unintentionally, we believe that the "challenge multiplier" runs the very real risk of actually further solidifying an acceptance of poverty as permanent. While we certainly support the inclusion of a metric designed to recognize the impact of poverty and additional challenges our young people face, we question the ability of this specific metric to do so.

### **The PFT is opposed to SB751.**

Our concerns regarding teacher evaluation have been clearly articulated since the inception of Act 82 in 2013. Just this year, we undertook a member-wide survey and issued an in-depth report on our members' concerns with teacher evaluation and our recommendations for moving forward.

The legislation as outlined in SB751 fails to address our concerns, and in fact, yields quite little in addressing holistically a very significant issue facing educators across the Commonwealth, but particularly in large municipalities such as Philadelphia.

We will continue to communicate and advocate for a legislative agenda that provides our children with the schools they deserve. We are fighting for an investment agenda that brings our schools to equity. On behalf of the more than 12,000 educators in the Commonwealth's largest school district, I urge the rejection of SB751 as currently crafted. Philadelphia's students and educators are facing dire environmental hazards in their places of learning, as well as persistent issues like teacher vacancies, and teacher recruitment and retention remains an urgent issue. *To pass legislation that does very little to demonstrate a true understanding of what our educators need would be deeply problematic.*

For a comprehensive look at our concerns with SB751, **Click here to see our recent memo**

**Click here to see the results of our teacher evaluation survey**

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