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Senate of Pennsylvania

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STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEMS BOARD

May 23, 2018

The Honorable James Kenney
Mayor, City of Philadelphia
City Hall, Office 215
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

The Honorable William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent, The School District of Philadelphia
440 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19130

Dear Mayor Kenney and Dr. Hite:

I know you share my outrage over the Inquirer's recent series "Toxic City." As you are aware, the series highlighted the appalling conditions through many of the Philadelphia School District's schools. Peeling lead paint, mouse droppings, leaking pipes, holes in ceilings and mold highlight just some of the issues uncovered by the "Toxic City" series. These conditions are unacceptable anywhere, let alone in our schools. These unsafe and unsanitary conditions that have overrun our schools require urgent and immediate action.

I strongly believe that this summer the City and School District should undertake necessary steps to reduce or eliminate these unsanitary conditions. An aggressive deep-clean of all surfaces through each building is a common-sense step that can be accomplished quickly. The deep-clean should include special attention to areas with peeling lead paint, to windows that have plaster and to other surfaces that are a necessary part of a student's educational experience. It is also necessary that follow up thorough cleaning practices are continued throughout the course of the school year to ensure our students have a safe, clean and sanitary school environment.

I understand that a number of the conditions raised in the "Toxic City" report have been previously reported and are awaiting action on the corresponding work orders. I ask that you immediately take steps to greatly reduce or eliminate the backlog of work orders. While working through that backlog special attention should be paid to: repairing outstanding plumbing problems, including exposed or leaking pipes; ensuring all bathrooms and water fountains throughout each school building are fully functional and sanitary; and having mold-free and leak-free fully operational HVAC systems.

I have heard from students from the 7th Senatorial District who have expressed their concern with the conditions of their buildings. These concerns are not consigned to legislative districts, they

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affect all students throughout the city. I hope you will consider these and other recommendations that can guarantee we are providing our students with the healthiest and safest learning environments possible.

I look forward to discussing how to address these recommendations further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent Hughes", written over a horizontal line.

Vincent Hughes
Democratic Appropriations Chair