









Education Governance Cheat Sheet and Key Questions for Candidates

Key Questions to Ask the Candidates



Candidates for Mayor

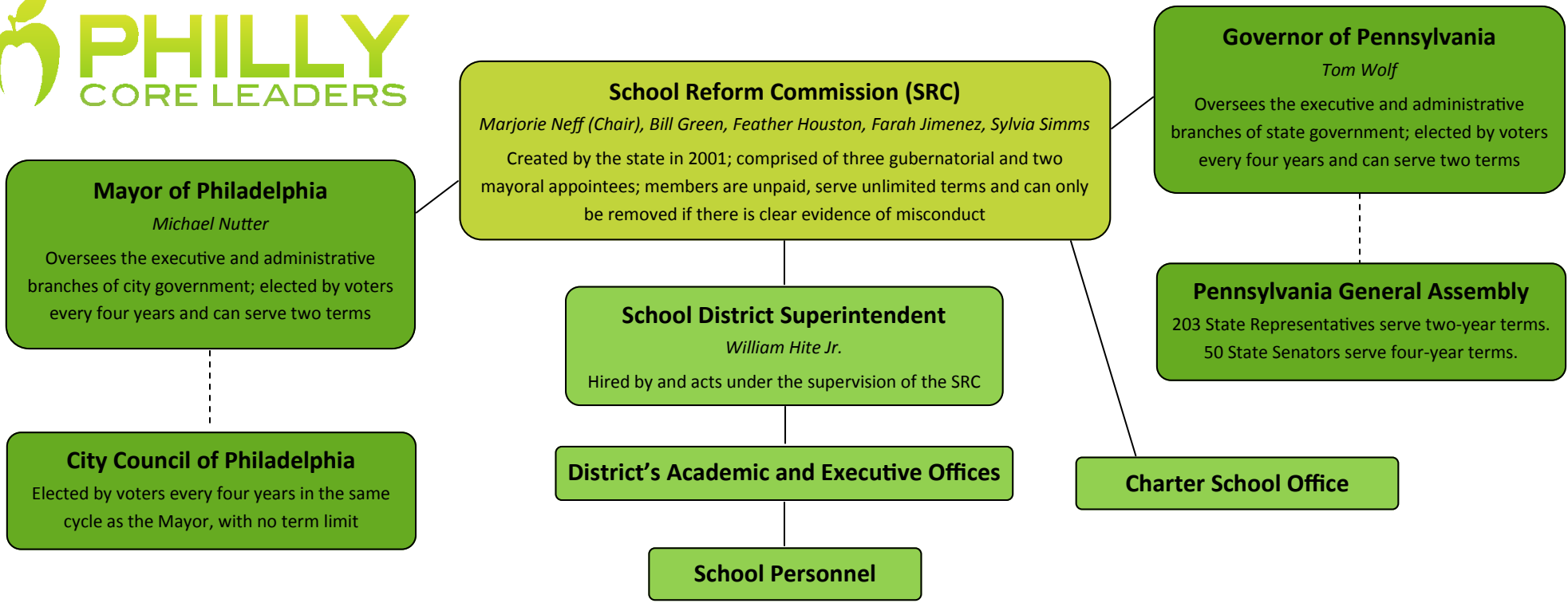
-  Of the current administration's initiatives serving youth, in which would you continue to invest resources? (i.e. Would you have a Mayor's Office of Education? Which components of the Nutter administration's Shared Prosperity effort for improving city services would you continue?)
-  What steps would you take to help foster a constructive relationship with elected officials in the General Assembly, especially around issues of education, finance, etc.?
-  Do you think the SRC is an effective governance model for city schools? If so, what could you do as Mayor to support the commission? If you don't believe the SRC is the most effective model, what alternative would you support?
-  Given the resources and authority at your disposal as Mayor, what specific steps would you take or advocate for in order to recruit and keep good teachers in Philadelphia?

Candidates for City Council

-  Voters will be asked on May 19 whether the city should create a permanent commission to investigate how to fund universal Pre-K access. If the ballot question passes, what would your recommendations on funding plans be to the commission?
-  City Council recently hired its own lobbyist in Harrisburg; this is in addition to two lobbying firms employed by the Mayor to represent the city. Does this make it easier or harder to make a case to state lawmakers for issues important to Philadelphia? What steps would you take to foster a constructive relationship with state officials to support city schools?
-  In 2013, City Council urged the school district to require Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States" in the high school curriculum. Should the Council play a role in how schools function (e.g. other curricular priorities, hiring of faculty, codes of conduct)?
-  Locally elected officials and other education stakeholders have difficulty seeking consensus on how to improve Philadelphia schools. What specific steps would you take to work with the new Mayor and your colleagues on City Council to find opportunities for agreement or compromise? Can you give an example of a complex or difficult education issue on which you'd help encourage such agreement?

All Candidates

-  What local policy changes would you support to increase funding for Philadelphia schools? Would you be willing to raise revenue (increase taxes, create a new tax, sell certain city services), cut costs (trim budgets of other city services, address pension costs, etc.), or some combination of both? If change is needed, what is it, and how will you see it implemented?
-  How would you leverage city government departments to support the school system?



	Power the office has...	Power it does <u>not</u> have...
School Reform Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees all major policy and budgetary decisions for the School District Hires (and fires) the Superintendent Decides whether to open or close schools (including charters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot control how much funding is allocated to schools by the city or state Cannot levy taxes
Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hires and leads the administrative team that oversees the school system Creates and manages the school district's annual budget and strategic plan Negotiates labor contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot control how much funding is allocated to schools by the city or state Cannot levy taxes
Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoints three of five SRC members Proposes state budget to General Assembly for approval, including school funding (\$1.36 billion for city schools in 2014) Appoints Secretary of Education to set and oversee state education policy (e.g. state testing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No authority over district budget or policies Cannot disband the SRC (majority of SRC members would have to vote for dissolution and state Secretary of Education would have to approve)
Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoints two of five SRC members Proposes city budget to Council for approval, including school funding (\$1.373 billion for city schools in 2014) Oversees city departments that interact with schools and city youth (e.g. DHS, Parks & Rec) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No authority over district budget or policies Cannot disband the SRC (see above cell) Cannot change state taxes that fund schools without approval from the state (e.g. sales tax)
City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the city budget proposed by the Mayor Passes legislation that can affect aspects of city education (e.g. universal pre-K commission) Holds hearings on education and passes resolutions (like calls-to-attention) on certain issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council shares the same limitations as the Mayor (indicated above)