

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
HENRY C. LEA SCHOOL

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January 14, 2022

To the students, families, staff, and partners of Henry C. Lea Elementary School,

It is with great excitement that I share with you a vision for the future of our school and the beginning of a process through which we will dream of and design for that future together. Over the last two years, we have experienced the most challenging conditions that our school community has ever faced. During these difficult times, it is important that we continue moving forward as a school so we are always growing, improving, and keeping pace with the interests and needs of our students and school community. Over the coming years, we are committed to a student-centered learning model through which teaching and learning is focused on students' lived experiences and their questions about the world, and where students participate in community-connected projects. Our development as a student-centered school will be a school-wide effort, and we are committed to working with all of you to make sure that we continue to grow into the school that every Lea student deserves.

I am also excited to share that we are in discussions with the School District of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers about ways to support our school's future development. Our hope is to move towards an agreement that would provide support for a five-year period to help the Lea school community realize its vision for student-centered learning.

As you probably know, our school partners with many different community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and local institutions. The partnership between Henry C. Lea School and the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is one of our oldest and most wide-ranging relationships, dating back to the 1960s, and has grown stronger in recent years. Penn supports Lea through staffing, programming, and resources that help address the holistic interests and needs of Lea students, families, and staff. At the same time, Lea contributes to Penn's vision and mission, as our school serves as a site of learning, apprenticeship, and service for many Penn students, faculty, and staff every school year.

As our school's principal, I am committed to leading a process through which our school community can discuss and design together a strengthened partnership to achieve our collective goals. I am committed to making this process inclusive, most importantly by engaging with the diverse communities that make up our Lea school community—including students, families, school staff, partners, community members, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the School District of Philadelphia, and Penn. And I am committed to a process that is equitable and open so that we hear and listen to the many and varied interests and needs of the members of our school community.

The conversations between the District and Penn about the proposed partnership are still ongoing, with many details still to be worked out, but I am optimistic that we are moving in a positive direction. Over the coming months, there will be a number of opportunities to share your opinions, questions, concerns, and hopes regarding the Lea-Penn Partnership and the future of our school. We will start by hosting

town halls and meetings during the months of January and February 2022, and will schedule various open meetings and focus groups in the following months, as well as use surveys to gather input and feedback. Information about our first round of meetings can be found in the chart below. Information about future meetings, focus groups, and surveys will be shared in advance through various channels including letters, emails, our school website (<https://lea.philasd.org/>), the Lea Express newsletter (<https://sites.google.com/philasd.org/lea-express/current-issue>), ClassDojo, and the District's automated messaging service, School Messenger.

<p>For students and families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wednesday 1/19/22: Monthly School Advisory Council (SAC) meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 5:30 pm on Zoom: https://philasd-org.zoom.us/j/4566437297 b. SAC meetings are open to all Lea families and school staff! 2. Wednesday 1/26/22: Family town halls <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 10:00 am (morning) on Zoom: https://philasd-org.zoom.us/j/4566437297 b. 6:00 pm (evening) on Zoom: https://philasd-org.zoom.us/j/4566437297 c. These separate town halls—1 in the morning and 1 in the evening—are open to all Lea families! 3. Wednesday 2/9/22: Monthly Home & School Association (HSA) meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 7:00 pm on Zoom: https://tinyurl.com/lea-hsa-mtg-zoom-21-22 b. HSA meetings are open to all Lea families! 4. March – June 2022 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. More information to be shared soon!
<p>For school staff</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monday 1/3/22: District-wide full-day staff professional development 2. Friday 1/21/22: District-wide half-day staff professional development 3. Friday 2/18/22: District-wide half-day staff professional development 4. March – June 2022 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. More information to be shared soon!
<p>For partners and community members</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tuesday 1/25/22: Winter all-partner meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 10:00 am on Zoom: https://upenn.zoom.us/j/9967328100 2. February – June 2022 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. More information to be shared soon!

It is both exciting and demanding to have an opportunity like this before us while we are all dealing with so many challenges in our school, community, and city. This opportunity to plan together for the future of our school has filled me with hope, and I am excited to work with all of you to collaborate on our continued growth as a school community.

Humbly,

Aaron Gerwer
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