

# Ten-Year Extension of Penn Alexander School Pact Continues Penn's Support of Public Schools

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PHILADELPHIA — With the School Reform Commission's approval, the partnership agreement that supports the successful and innovative pre-K-8 [Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University of Pennsylvania Partnership School](#) in West Philadelphia has been extended for an additional 10 years, through June 30, 2021.

Under the new agreement, Penn will continue to provide a contribution of \$1,330 per child per year to the school, as much as \$700,000, and a range of other services for the term of the agreement. Penn Alexander School, a neighborhood school, last year enrolled 605 students in kindergarten through grade 8 who speak 21 languages. Seventy percent are children of color and 46 percent are from economically disadvantaged families. In addition, there are 38 children enrolled in Head Start at the school.

The University-assisted Penn Alexander School, the result of a 1999 partnership between Penn, the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers provides the highest quality educational opportunities for West Philadelphia children in its catchment area through reduced class sizes, site-selection for teachers, innovative curricula and support and guidance from Penn, particularly its [Graduate School of Education](#). PAS offers Penn students state-of-the-art teacher training opportunities in an urban setting and has been hailed as a gold standard by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities for bringing the most effective, research-proven educational practices into its classrooms.

"We are delighted to announce the renewal of our partnership with the Philadelphia School District and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to provide the highest-quality education to the school children of our West

Philadelphia community,” [Penn President Amy Gutmann](#) said. “Nothing is more important to the health and vitality of a community than the quality of its public schools, and the Penn Alexander School illustrates this important fact every day. This agreement recognizes the partners' wish for Penn Alexander's continued success and supports the University's goal to enable every child to benefit from proven educational practices at this award-winning public school.”

“Penn Alexander School demonstrates how valuable educational partnerships can be in the lives of our young people,” Arlene Ackerman, School District of Philadelphia superintendent, said. “The School District and Penn Alexander’s students, parents and staff are all grateful for the unique opportunity to work with the University of Pennsylvania in creating and sustaining this high-quality learning environment.”

“In Penn Alexander, we have created the school that every child deserves. Now we must replicate Penn Alexander’s program in every school, in every neighborhood. It’s a testament to what we can accomplish when we work together,” Jerry T. Jordan, president of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, said. “Through the collaborative efforts of the School District, Penn and the PFT, we have created a model for what every school should be -- a warm, nurturing and academically challenging learning environment. Penn Alexander benefits from strong community, faculty and parental engagement. Housed in an inviting facility, the staff blends innovative learning strategies with proven educational programs.”

The school held its first classes in 2001, moving into a new building that Penn constructed in 2002. Since that time, PAS has earned more than three dozen teacher, student and institutional awards and has garnered outside grants to fund music, art, health and environmental programs.

“This partnership has been invaluable,” Sheila Sydnor, PAS principal, said. “I am humbled by the extraordinary level of support for the school. Our student success is evidence that these types of partnerships work.”

The school has a School Performance Index Overall Rank of 1 and a

Similar School Rank of 2 in the district's comprehensive comparison of school success on key components that include student proficiency, student growth and attendance. It has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress, the federal benchmark for student achievement, every year it has been eligible. Penn Alexander is consistently ranked among the top 10 schools in the school district.

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