

# About Edison Schools in Philadelphia

*Thomas Edison didn't invent a better candle—he invented the light bulb. That is the standard we try to live up to at our partnership schools.*

The School Reform Commission (SRC) announced its decision to engage outside education management organizations to partner with some of Philadelphia's public schools. Edison Schools is honored to have been chosen to manage some of those schools, and looks forward to working in partnership with the many talented teachers and principals, committed students and parents, and dedicated community partners of the Philadelphia school system.

The programs and systems that Edison has developed over the past ten years have resulted in significant achievement gains and improvements for teachers and students in our public schools. We believe that these ideas will have a similar positive impact on the life of our Philadelphia-Edison partnership schools.

**We promise:**

**A Fresh Start** which begins with a clean, safe building.

**A Strong Principal** who is an energetic, well-supported and confident leader.

**Dedicated Teachers and Staff** who are dynamic and appreciated professionals who receive ample professional development and teacher planning time.

**New Textbooks and Materials** which will be purchased and provided for students and teachers at all our Philadelphia-Edison partnership schools.

**A Strong Student Achievement Plan** which will provide a detailed plan of action to improve student achievement at each Philadelphia-Edison partnership school—creating goals and higher expectations that build on the good work that has already been done.

Our goal is nothing less than to increase educational opportunities and outcomes and improve levels of student achievement for the children of Philadelphia. To do this, we make these public promises to you, your children and your community.

## Features of Philadelphia-Edison Partnership Schools

A Safe and Supportive  
Learning Environment

A Rich and Challenging  
Curriculum

Teaching Methods that  
Motivate

A Professional and  
Supportive Environment  
for Teachers

Schools Organized to Meet  
Every Student's Needs

An Aligned Assessment  
System that Provides  
Accountability

An Efficient Use of Time

A Meaningful Partnership  
with Families

A Strong Connection with  
Local Communities



“With the Edison design, the network of support, and the innovative use of technology, we’ve been able to build a school that’s a better, safer place, with more educational opportunities for the children in this community.”

—Dr. John Pannell,  
Principal, Edison-  
Friendship School,  
Chamberlain Campus,  
Washington, DC



## How will Edison Partnership Schools in Philadelphia be different?

Edison schools look and feel brighter, and our Philadelphia classrooms will be stocked with new textbooks, curriculum materials, and additional technology. Teachers will be treated like the professionals they are, supported by a research-based curriculum, ample educational resources, and extensive, ongoing professional development and teacher planning. Principals will be given the independence and support to create a positive and safe learning environment for their staff and their students.

## How will Edison improve student achievement at its schools in Philadelphia?

Edison Schools will build a culture of achievement and maintain high standards at every partnership school by involving principals, teachers, students, and parents. In Philadelphia, we will be working hard to provide a well-rounded education, with more time for reading and math as well as special subjects such as music, art, and physical education. We will also work to raise scores across the board, with a special focus on PSSA and SAT-9 exams. As students work to meet higher expectations in a challenging but supportive environment, they will gain greater motivation and confidence that will serve them throughout their school years and into the future.

## Who are the people behind Edison Schools in Philadelphia?

Edison’s team consists of diverse public school professionals from across the country and Philadelphia. Before opening its first schools in 1995, Edison engaged in three years of intensive research and development by a team that included respected education researchers, curriculum developers, teachers, principals, school administrators, writers, technology specialists, and experts in school finance and management. Some of those who worked to create the Edison school design as well as other experienced professionals from the fields of education, technology, government, communications, and business are guiding its implementation in our Philadelphia partnership schools. Together these diverse professionals represent many years of education and management experience.

## How will Edison and the local Philadelphia community work together?

Edison understands that parent involvement and community investment are essential to the success of our Philadelphia partnership schools. Recognizing that no two Philadelphia communities are alike, each school

will work with its community to meet local needs. We will also listen closely to recommendations from citywide and local advisory councils made up of parents, students and community members, as established by the SRC.

A successful school is responsive to its community; that is why we want to work closely with community members and leaders, students, teachers, and, perhaps most important, parents and families to provide a supportive environment for the academic, social, and emotional development of each child.

### What guarantee is there that Edison will help improve its schools in Philadelphia?

Edison partnership schools in Philadelphia will be doing well when students and families are doing better. Edison will be accountable for the operation, management, achievement results and financial well-being of each school. If Edison's Philadelphia schools don't help improve achievement and educational opportunities for its students, then we know we won't be invited to stay. Each year, beginning in 2003–2004, the SRC will evaluate Edison partnership schools based on overall performance and improvements in student achievement. This is the first time there has been this kind of accountability in Philadelphia, and we think that will be a good thing for students, teachers, and families.

### In addition to Philadelphia, where else could I find Edison schools?

Edison schools are located across the country in 22 states and 53 communities, including: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York City, St. Paul, San Antonio, San Francisco, San Jose, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington.

### How can I find out more about what this all means for me?

Edison will share as much information as we have, as soon as we have it. Call our toll-free hotline at 1-800-518-5484 for up-to-date information and to leave a message with your questions, concerns, or ideas, or visit <http://philadelphia.edisonschools.com> for more information about Philadelphia-Edison partnership schools. In addition we will be regularly publishing and distributing a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). These FAQ sheets will address the questions of greatest interest to you, available both on our web site and in hard copy.

"I'm learning more than I ever learned before."

—Dalton Bradford,  
Edison Fifth Grader,  
Baltimore, MD

"My daughter's reading skills were below grade level. I'm happy to say she's moving up and by the end of the year, she'll be on her grade level. You can call me a satisfied customer."

—Portia L. West,  
Parent, Wetherill  
Edison Elementary  
School, Chester, PA



## A Successful Track Record

- 84 percent of Edison schools are achieving at higher levels now than when they opened.
- The average achievement gains of all Edison schools have averaged five or six points annually since 1995.
- The average gain in 2000–2001 was seven percentage points, one point higher than the average gain from 1995–2000.
- In 2000–2001 Edison reduced failure rates an average of nine percentage points per school.



## What Edison brings to Philadelphia

The school design and academic program that Edison will use in Philadelphia will serve all students, whatever their needs. The program will create opportunities for improved achievement as well as a proven capacity to meet the needs of Philadelphia children, including:

- A consistent record of success in managing—to high levels of academic and financial performance—136 public schools serving 75,000 students;
- A strong record of student achievement, making Edison one of the most successful systems of schools in the country;
- A broad knowledge base that comes from working partnerships with 61 public school systems and charter school authorities in 22 states;
- Expert systems and experience in areas key to schools' academic and economic success, including: curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, recruitment and professional development, operations and financial management;
- Close partnerships with national and local community organizations; and
- A significant investment in understanding the challenges facing public education in Philadelphia.

Our goal is nothing less than to work in partnership to increase educational opportunities and outcomes for the children of Philadelphia.

## A Brief History

Edison Schools, formed in 1992 as The Edison Project, was developed to create schools where creativity, technological sophistication, high motivation, accountability, and other elements that contribute to excellence are the norm. Edison is dedicated to providing a world-class education for all students.

As the nation's largest private manager of public schools serving K–12 students, Edison contracts with local school districts and public charter school boards to assume educational and operational responsibility for individual schools. Together with our partners, local boards of education, state chartering authorities, charter boards, superintendents, unions, principals, teachers, and parents, we create schools that achieve lasting gains in students' academic performance while serving the diverse needs of all students.

Philadelphia  
Edison  Schools

1-800-518-5484

<http://philadelphia.edisonschools.com>