



## **PFT Candidate Questionnaire**

The following information was submitted to the PFT by the following candidate running for office in the May 2019 Primary Election



**Candidate Name:** Maria Quinones Sanchez

**Party Affiliation:** Democrat

**Office Sought:** City Council, 7th District (incumbent)

## Office Sought \*

City Council District 7



## Legislative Priorities

PFT Members have recently participated in a survey of their legislative priorities. We used the survey to formulate our legislative agenda for 2019. Please respond to areas of concern for PFT members, and comment on your experience/abilities addressing some of top issues.

On a 1-5 scale (5 being the most important), how important are the following issues to you as a candidate? In the comments, please identify any/all legislative solutions that you believe would address the issue.

### Investment in School Facilities Funding \*

How significant do you believe the \$5B in deferred maintenance for school facilities is? How central of a part of your candidacy/position in office will this issue be?

1

2

3

4

5

Strongly disagree





Strongly agree  
and commit

### Comments on Facilities Funding:

I established the School Building and Facilities Task Force in May 2018, in order to review, assess, and recommend a budget that fully supports the School District's capital needs and priorities. I believe our schools deserve utmost attention and expertise to address the physical and environmental decay of our schools, as underscored by the Philly Healthy Schools Initiative and the Inquirer's series, "Toxic City, Sick Schools." I look forward to working together with national experts and federal and city officials to further an adequately developed, well-resourced plan for healthy school facilities.

Do you support a City moratorium on charter schools? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree






Strongly agree  
and commit

Comment on city wide ability to implement increased charter oversight and/or ability to implement a charter school moratorium:

I continue to advocate for a fully funded expansion plan to remove stranded costs. I agree that oversight and funding mechanisms are problematic. In 2015, I led City Council's charge for an operational audit and a fair funding formula to support the equitable funding of all schools across the Commonwealth, noting marked increases in charter school spending, and marked decreases in District-operated school funding. Since that time, City Council has dedicated unprecedented resources to public schools, and I have voted consistently to support fair funding and the continuation of that trend.

Are you in favor of modifying the 10 year tax abatement? \*

1 2 3 4 5

No, should stay  
as is






Yes, absolutely  
needs to be  
modified

Comments on your vision for the 10 year tax abatement:

I voted for Councilman Goode's proposal for an equitable abatement cap, so that the City is not taxing Frankford rowhome renovations at the same rate as Center City luxury condominiums. Philadelphia's teachers and students deserve responsive, adaptive, equitable, and progressive tax policies that make our city more diverse and inclusive.

Are you in favor of modifying the corporate tax structure so that wealthier businesses and individuals increase their contributions? \*

|                       | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |                                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| No, should stay as is | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Yes, absolutely needs to be modified |

Comments on your vision for taxes:

I have dedicated my City Council career to supporting equitable and progressive taxation for reinvestment in our schools and our workforce. Large corporations must do more to pay their fair share of revenue for Philadelphia schools. My small business legislation includes exemptions for use and occupancy tax and business income and receipts tax, which enabled the City to increase revenue for teachers and students, while shifting the tax burden away from local entrepreneurs who stabilize our corridors. I propose that Council further reform the business income and receipts tax by eliminating net profits tax and simply taxing gross receipts at a higher rate so that corporations cannot shift net profit losses to avoid their fair share of school revenue.

How important is it for you to find ways to reduce class size? \*

|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

Comments:

As the director of ASPIRA, Pennsylvania's largest Latino educational institution, I fought proactively to significantly reduce the ratio of students to teachers in the classroom. As an educator, I deeply understand the impact on teachers' ability to connect individually with students to create space for educational, social, and behavioral achievement.

How important is it for you to find ways to increase support personnel? \*

|               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                                  |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

Comments:

Support personnel critically support the growth of our children, from supporting their access to healthy food and libraries to providing speech therapy and trauma-informed care. I have supported several City Council budget and policy initiatives to increase children's access to support personnel and will continue to do so.

How important is it for you to improve access to services for students with special needs? \*

|               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                                  |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

Comments:

I strongly believe that our City must be proactive in supporting greater recruitment and retention of special needs teachers. Schools at a local and national level are suffering shortages of special education professionals, particularly in high-poverty schools where budget cuts and class sizes have driven increased teacher dissatisfaction. The City must equip schools with more resources and better recruitment strategies.

How important is it for you to improve access to services for students who are English Language Learners? \*

|               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                                  |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

## Comments:

Language access is fundamental to the success of Philadelphia's substantial immigrant population. More than a quarter of Philadelphia households speak a native language other than English. As a founder of the first bilingual school in Pennsylvania, I continue to advocate for real "Dual language" programming. At Council, I have been proud to change the City Charter to require all agencies to annually adopt language access plans to improve opportunities for students, teachers, residents, workers, and businesses. This year, I am proud to lead the passage of another Charter Change that, with the support of Philadelphia voters, will create a permanent Office of Immigrant Affairs to support language access policy across all City agencies. Beyond policy, we must continue to proactively recruit and retain bilingual teachers.

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How important is it for you to increase access to school counselors? \*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

## Comments:

School counselors empower students to strive broadly in their academic, personal, and career pursuits. In 2016, I was a strong supporter of the PFT's campaign to ensure that each school had at least one counselor, in the wake of comprehensive cuts in 2013. Since that time, the School District has added at least 84 counselor positions, but Philadelphia remains far short of the American School Counselor Association's goal of 1 counselor to every 250 students. I will continue to work with the PFT and Philly School Counselors United to ensure that the City of Philadelphia achieves this goal.

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How important is it for you to increase access to certified school nurses? \*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

Students' access to certified school nurses is critical to their social and academic achievement. I am committed to working with PFT to ensure that all of our schools have adequate access to quality healthcare. Without nurses, children often do not receive urgent medical care, disability evaluations, and treatments at prescribed intervals.

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How important is it for you to increase access to social services in schools?

\*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

I strongly believe that Community Schools and co-location models are critical to efficiently engaging children with quality, comprehensive support services. I support better coordination between the City and School District to ensure that social service programs provide quality, holistic support to children entrusted in our care. My call for reforms of the Community Behavioral Health system led to the appointment of the Superintendent to the Board. I continue to advocate that principals and teachers can choose service providers and intervention strategies.

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How important is it for you to increase access to funding for CTE programs in schools? \*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

I am a proud VoTech graduate who cherishes that Philadelphia offers its students the unique opportunity to gain experience with real-life success without leaving the classroom. I have fought for increased funding for CTE in schools during every budget cycle in City Council and during every discussion or negotiation with a major business. I do not miss an opportunity to remind our business leaders that it is a duty of a Philadelphia employer to strengthen our economy by investing in a diverse and local workforce.

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How important is it for you to increase the number of African American teachers and educators of color in our schools? \*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

I strongly believe that diversity and inclusion in the classroom is critical to children's ability to interpret and relate to their environment. As an educator of color, I embraced a special duty and privilege to inspire my students hopes and dreams of success. And as the leader of a diverse educational institution, I saw my students grow more accepting, more adaptable, and more understanding of the world around them.

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How important is it for you to protect the rights of workers to collectively bargain and for educators to have a fair contract? \*

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

Teachers can change a child's future in extraordinary ways. I fully support the rights of workers to collectively bargain for fair contracts. I have been on the front lines with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and will always to be an unwavering advocate. Most recently, the absence of contract for Philadelphia teachers caused teachers to spend money out of their own pockets to provide basic supplies for their classrooms.

How important is it for you to expand the Community Schools model in Philadelphia? \*

|               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                                  |          |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
|               | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                                |          |
| Not important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Critical |

**Comments:**

I strongly support a drastic expansion of the Community Schools model so that diverse neighborhoods across the city benefit from neighborhood anchors that holistically serve the needs of students and their families under one schoolhouse roof. Over the past four years, I have insisted that our program better engage social service providers so that community schools also create efficiencies in our budgets for teachers and students by leveraging existing funding.

What is your vision for public education in Philadelphia, and how have you worked (either currently in office or your current position) to promote an equity agenda in Philadelphia's schools?

I feel blessed in my long-term partnership with PFT, as an advocate and Councilmember, for our achievements including smaller classrooms, better facilities, fair funding, and local control. I have never been prouder to be the graduate of Philadelphia public schools. We need to grow the city's budget and policy textbook to equip teachers with the skills and resources they need to inspire our next generation of impactful youth.

## What are other legislative issues of top priority for you?

Equitable tax policy is critical to fair funding for schools. I introduced legislation that would increase the School District real estate millage from 55% to 60%. I also believe strongly that household stability is critical to a child's academic achievement. Students without stable housing struggle with attendance, health, and behavioral issues that impact learning. I have led City Council's passage of expanded resources for accessible, affordable housing, inclusionary zoning, and tax relief for low-income residents.

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## Is there anything else you would like to share with PFT members about your candidacy? What are ways you see yourself working with the PFT in office? Are there other items on our platform that you believe will be significant in your work?

As an educator, the PFT has had an incredibly special impact on my life and career. I am proud of our work together, from my service at the grassroots level to my tenure on City Council as a champion of fair funding and local control of schools. Please find my biography at [Maria2019.com](http://Maria2019.com) and don't hesitate to call me for further information.

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This form was created inside of Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

Google Forms