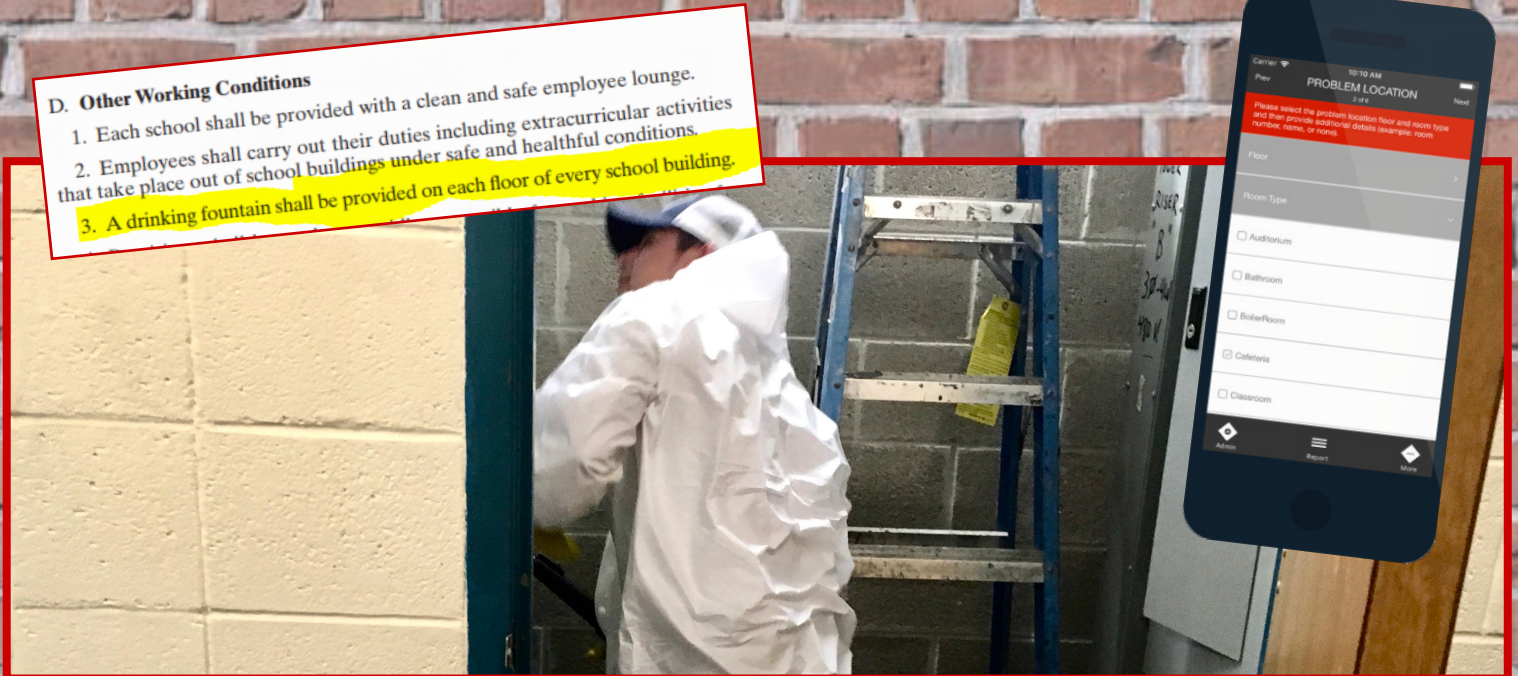




The **PFT**: Leading the Fight to Fix Philadelphia's **School Buildings**

D. Other Working Conditions

1. Each school shall be provided with a clean and safe employee lounge.
2. Employees shall carry out their duties including extracurricular activities that take place out of school buildings under safe and healthful conditions.
3. A drinking fountain shall be provided on each floor of every school building.



How the **Philadelphia Federation of Teachers**, through the **PFT Health & Welfare Fund**, uses activism, collective bargaining, advocacy, community building and political organizing to **improve teaching and learning conditions** in Philadelphia's public schools



The Union's Long Fight for Better School Buildings

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, through the **PFT Health & Welfare Fund (PFTHW)**, has been at the forefront of addressing Philadelphia's school building conditions for over three decades. No other education advocacy organization in the city has done more to raise the issue, and make real improvements than the PFT.

The PFT's activism around school buildings began in 1970, when the union fought to **include language requiring working water fountains at every school** into its contract with the District. The District wanted this language removed as recently as 2012, but from the union's viewpoint, this is a non-negotiable provision that has remained in our contract for nearly 50 years.

In 1985, the union publicly called out the School District of Philadelphia for improperly handling asbestos remediation and sending schoolchildren and educators into school buildings without valid results. **School communities, including parents, would not reenter these schools until PFTHW verified that they were safe.** The more than **10,000 asbestos inspections** in the years to follow brought about improvements to the entire remediation process, from improved evaluation and sampling procedures to asbestos removal techniques.



In 1996, the PFT sprang into action in response to reports of children and staff getting sick during warm weather months. After investigating, it was discovered that chemicals used during roof replacement and other repairs were causing the illnesses. PFTHW immediately developed the protocols that prevented these chemicals from entering buildings during the school day.



The PFT's efforts to remove lead from schools' drinking water from 1993 to 2003 resulted in the District agreeing to test all water outlets and **remediate or remove outlets that had unacceptable lead levels.** The union later lobbied City Council to adopt the most protective water quality standards legislation in the country, including regular retesting and was also successful in getting hydration stations installed in every school building.

In 2010, **PFTHW developed a coordinated reporting and response system** with the District to address environmental and building related condition issues. The system resulted in over 1,300 inspections that revealed more than 19,000 deficiencies.

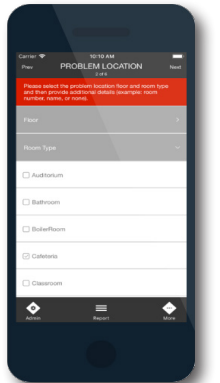
From 2014-2016, PFTHW worked with the District on a comprehensive study of mold, moisture, and dampness conducted by the Center for Disease Control and NIOSH. This was the largest study of school buildings ever conducted by the District, assessing more than 7,500 spaces in 50 schools.



Leading the Community Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning Conditions

The PFT became a founding member of the **Philly Healthy Schools Initiative**, a coalition of community groups and elected leaders, in 2017. In 2018, the PFT worked alongside this coalition to create the nation's most robust lead paint stabilization legislation. The law requires every school building to have its lead paint stabilized and to have flaking lead paint cleaned immediately upon discovery.

In 2019, the PFT Health & Welfare Fund developed and released the **PFT Healthy Schools Tracker**, a free smartphone app that lets educators, students, and parents photograph and report issues directly to the union. These issues are reviewed and shared with the School District. The app has allowed reporting of issues in real-time, dramatically reducing the timeline for many repairs.



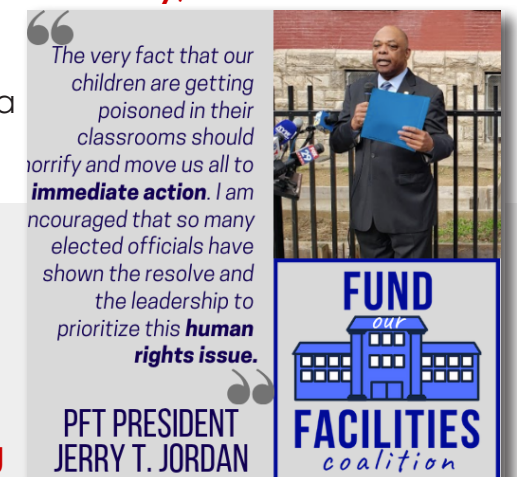
In 2019, the PFT again partnered with elected leaders, Labor unions, and community groups to form the **Fund Our Facilities Coalition**. This group was formed with the belief that we can make dramatic improvements in our schools without spending the billions it would require for District-wide renovations. The coalition is dedicated to identifying and securing ways to invest around \$170 million for repairs and improvements to Philly's schools.

One of the PFT's Legislative priorities has been to pressure the State Legislature to fund **PLANCON, a bipartisan initiative designed to assess school building needs across the Commonwealth.** PLANCON is currently unfunded, but newly elected PA Representatives and Senators—including those who are members of Fund Our Facilities—have committed to placing it at the top of their agenda.

The PFT firmly believes that **providing every child with a healthy, clean and safe learning environment is a moral imperative.**

Because, it's not enough to simply call attention to the problems in our school buildings, our union has a long history of direct action.

Whether it's the PFT Health and Welfare Fund spending its own money on an environmental scientist, developing and implementing new safety protocols and repair procedures, building coalitions and engaging in political advocacy, or investing in innovative new technology, the PFT has always been and will continue to be Philadelphia's leader in the fight for better school building conditions.



Learn about our coalition calling for a **\$170 million** investment to make critical repairs in Philly's school buildings:

PFT.org/fund-our-facilities



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PFT.org/fixing-school-buildings**