

Wednesday, October 7, 2026
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The Philadelphia Inquirer

EDUCATION

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3 Philly schools just won \$600,000 in from Jeff and Janine Yass

"We would love to do more in Philadelphia," Janine Yass said.

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Janine and Jeff Yass
Courtesy of the Yass Foundation for Education

by Kristen A. Graham
Published Oct. 7, 2026, 10:41 a.m. ET

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Philadelphia schools this week.

Salt & Light Academy for Boys won \$500,000 as a finalist for the Yass Prize; Girard College, and Cooking4Autism each won \$50,000 as semifinalists. The awards were given Tuesday at the conclusion of a summit on education innovation held at the National Constitution Center, which featured speakers including Florida Gov. [Ron DeSantis](#).

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The three Philadelphia schools were among 26 from across the U.S. competing for the funds from the Yass' educational philanthropic fund. [Jeff Yass](#) is a Republican megadonor and the richest person in Pennsylvania; Janine Yass is a founder of [Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter School](#).

Salt & Light, based out of the New Covenant Church of Philadelphia in [West Mount Airy](#) is a microschool serving 22 students.

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Salt & Light employs a hybrid model, with students enrolled in a cyber charter school but also receiving tailored academic and other support from in-person staff. Its founders are Jéneen Winters Barlow and Omar Barlow. Both are educators; Omar Barlow is also a pastor and former chief executive officer of Eastern University Charter School, [closed by the school district in 2019](#) over academic and compliance issues.

momGirard College, a historic boarding school in [North Philadelphia](#) founded in 1848 by financier Stephen Girard, educates students from economically disadvantaged families in a residential setting. (It was founded for "poor, white, male orphans," integrated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1965, and later opened to girls and students from single-parent homes.)

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son with autism who wanted “to provide the programs and environments she once searched for as a parent navigating the system.”

Armstrong was a plaintiff in the [landmark school funding lawsuit](#) that resulted in Pennsylvania’s school-funding formula being determined as unconstitutional and ordered replaced. She has also been affiliated with the group [Moms for Liberty](#).

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The top Yass Prize, which comes with \$1 million, was awarded to the Learning Lounge in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, “a learning model that unites education freedom, rural opportunity and community renewal to help rebuild the economic and civic life of communities that have lost schools and educational options.”

The prize honors schools deemed by the Center for Education Reform as “sustainable, transformational, outstanding and permissionless.”

“We are so honored to be able to do this work, and to find and support heroes who never stop advancing great education for kids. Across every sector, region and type of community, the members of the Yass Prize community go above and beyond to do right by kids,” Janine Yass said in a statement.

The Yasses’ school-choice advocacy has long drawn fire from advocates of traditional public schools, who often say that their efforts come at the expense of schools that must take all students.

‘We would love to do more in Philadelphia’

Yass said her school choice work stems from a desire to send her children to a school closest to her home.

That school happened to be a private school, the [Haverford School](#), where she met David Hardy, an educator from Philadelphia.

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“He was the gentleman that showed me what was going on in the city, where his boys would have gone to school if they didn’t get into the Haverford School,” Janine Yass said. “I was shocked, Jeff was shocked. And the fact that we had the freedom to choose where our children went, and that 99% of the people in Philadelphia do not have that freedom, was appalling to me.”

The Haverford School’s upper school tuition currently nears \$50,000 per student.

Janine Yass’ friendship with Hardy led to the founding of Boys’ Latin of Philadelphia, a charter still in existence today. Hardy has led Girard College for the past few years.

Janine Yass, in a Tuesday interview, said much of her family’s work is focused elsewhere in the country.

» **READ MORE:** [Billionaires Jeff and Janine Yass are offering full scholarships to students from closing Philly schools](#)

“We would love to do more in Philadelphia,” she said. “It breaks my heart that we can’t do more in Philly,” but “they won’t let us start charters. We’ve been dismissed from the conversation.”

The Yasses did make headlines after they offered “[Opportunity Knocks](#)” [scholarships of \\$8,000](#) to any student who opts to leave a closing Philadelphia School District school to attend a city private school.

Janine Yass said there’s been lower-than-expected interest in the scholarship to date, but that she’s still interested in the effort.

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Kristen A. Graham



I cover Philly schools, taking readers inside one of the largest districts in the country. I love a good drum line and a great classroom tale.

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TRENDING IN PHILLY

Why Lane Johnson called it a career four games into the Eagles' 2026 season

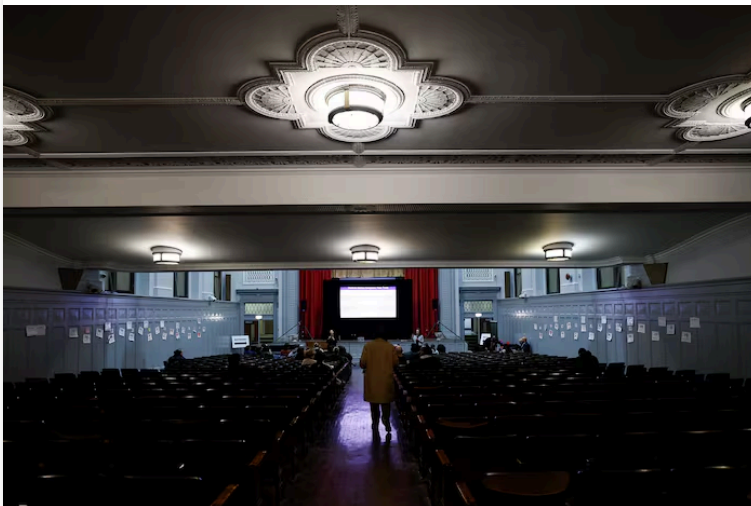
Eagles news: Lane Johnson retires; injury report; schedule; live updates

Two prosecutors resigned after they said Philly DA Larry Krasner 'sought to discredit' them in court

Apizzeria 888, a low-key pizza star, is closing in Elkins Park

Is a rescue coming for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University?

EDUCATION



Billionaires Jeff and Janine Yass are offering full scholarships to students from closing Philly schools

The scholarship, which offer students a chance to enroll in one of 16 private schools, has drawn fire from those who say it's designed to further erode the public school system.

Kristen A. Graham

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Notre Dame all-American Mike McGlinchey to savor his final season

Despite receiving a first-round draft grade from the NFL, McGlinchey decided to return for a final season at Notre Dame

Marc Narducci | Columnist

OPINION



School closures demonstrate the urgency of educational choice

After years of forcing students to attend schools based entirely on their zip code, officials seem unprepared when those schools disappear.

Andrew Lewis and Daniel P. Hardy, For The Inquirer

OPINION

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Letters to the Editor | March 11, 2026

Inquirer readers on the constitutionality of the Iran war and efforts to save Lankenau Magnet High School from closure.

Letters to the Editor, For The Inquirer

SPORTS



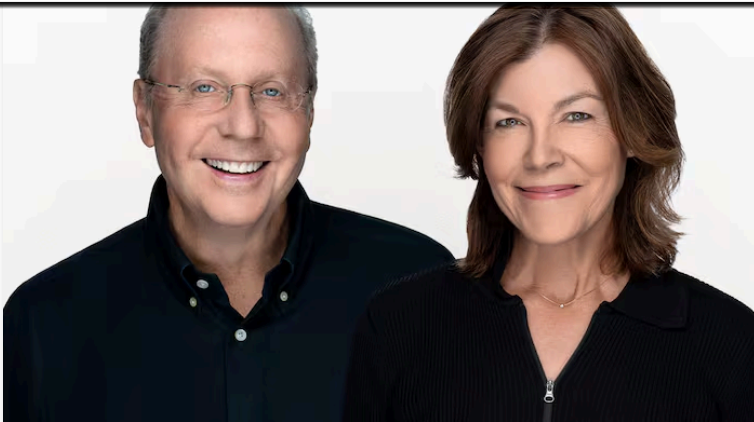
97.5 The Fanatic host Bill Colarulo has a unique backstory, including working for the Eagles and Big Dom

Bill Colarulo spent years as a New Jersey lawyer before landing a part-time gig at The Fanatic. Now he's cohosting the station's new afternoon show.

Rob Tornoe

OPINION

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Jeff and Janine Yass: Educational freedom is the right thing to do

Giving parents the power to choose the education they believe is best for their own children is a philosophical, practical, and moral priority.

Jeff Yass and Janine Yass, For The Inquirer

PENNSYLVANIA



Garbage collection fees may go up by 14% for Lower Merion residents in 2027

Without a fee increase, officials say the township's solid waste fund will face a \$1.3 million deficit.

Denali Sagner

NATION & WORLD

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Longtime Phish fan and respected show 'taper' killed in crash after band's Atlantic City concert

Duncan Oldham, of Geneva, N.Y., was struck and killed by a driver as he walked out of Phish's Saturday night show. Oldham, 69, was a well-known "taper," who recorded and shared Phish concert tapes.

Emily Bloch

PHILADELPHIA



The number of kids in Philly has dropped nearly 10% in 15 years

Philadelphia has lost 9% of its under-18 population in the past 15 years and the suburbs are following suit. Experts and residents without kids cite expenses and other life priorities as some reasons.

Dana Munro

NEWS

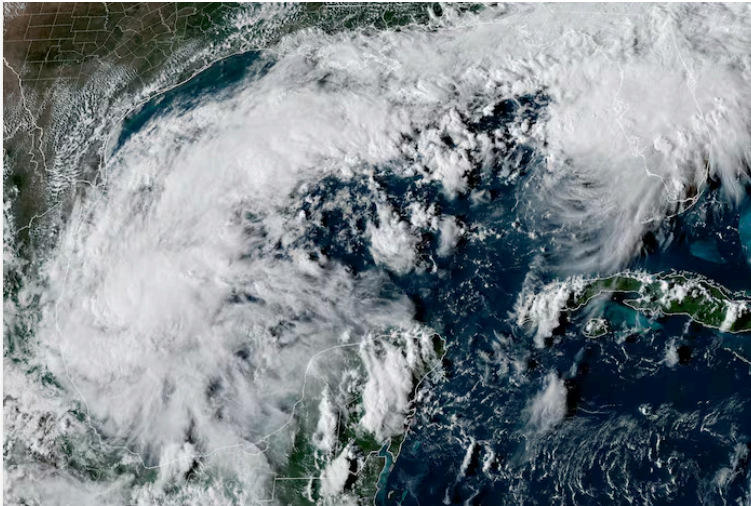
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Two prosecutors resigned after they said Philly DA Larry Krasner 'sought to discredit' them in court

Katherine Ernst and Steven Wildberger said in a memo that Krasner made misstatements about them in court documents, making it "impossible" to stay in their jobs. Krasner denied wrongdoing.

Chris Palmer

NATION & WORLD



Tropical Storm Isaias forms, forecast to become a hurricane and hit the US Gulf Coast this week

The hurricane center's initial projections said the center of Isaias could come onshore somewhere between eastern Louisiana and the western Florida Panhandle.

Associated Press

NATIONAL POLITICS

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Half a billion dollars in GOP spending does little to move polls

High-quality public surveys show Democratic Senate candidates tied or leading in Alaska, Georgia, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas — the same as before Labor Day.

Isaac Arnsdorf, Washington Post

NATION & WORLD



Israelis mourn Oct. 7 attack as Palestinians in Gaza live in ruins of war sparked by the assault

Israelis have gathered at intersections, bomb shelters and the site of a music festival that Hamas-led militants overran on Oct. 7, 2023.

Melanie Lidman, Associated Press

SCIENCE

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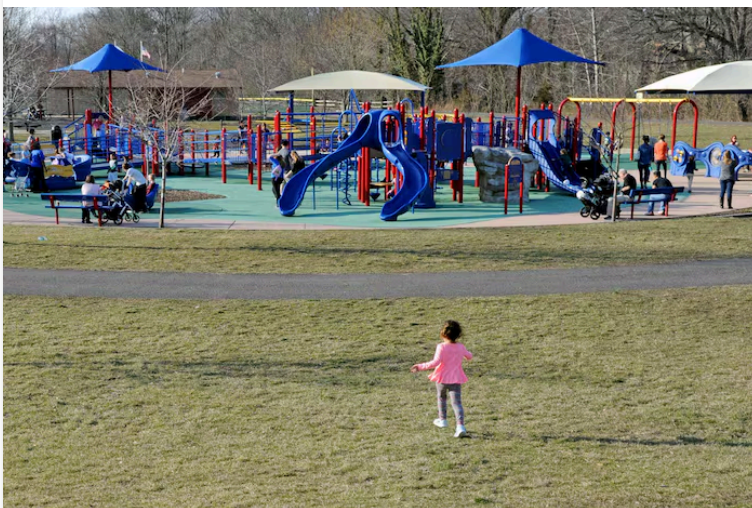


Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to Kagan and Soai for research solving 'mirror image' mystery

"This is probably the coolest experiment in organic chemistry," said Peter Somfai, a member of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

Adithi Ramakrishnan, Kostya Manenkov and Stefanie...

SOUTH JERSEY NEWS



Our decreasing child population | Inquirer South Jersey

🔥 And Collingswood's new pecking order.

Taylor Allen

POLITICS

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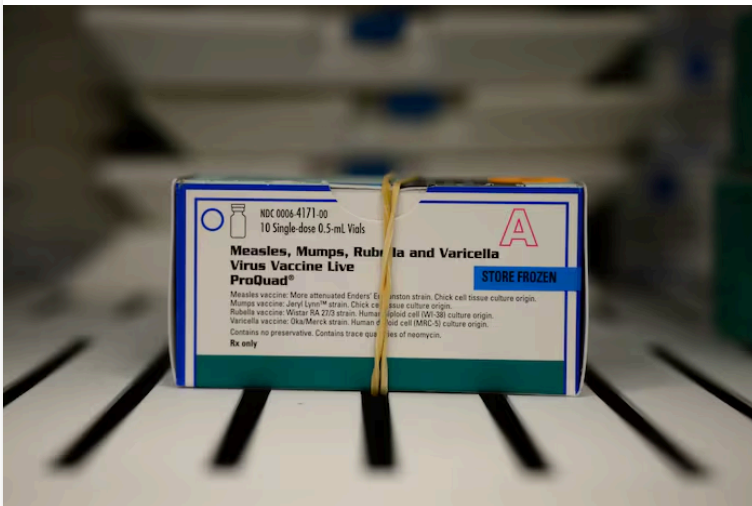


New Jersey bill would limit employers' ability to use AI to monitor workers or make changes to their jobs

Labor leaders contend that New Jersey workers are already being subjected to "unreasonable" surveillance by AI.

Susan K. Livio

PENNSYLVANIA



Mounting a measles defense | Inquirer Chester County

Plus, the Brandywine Creek's microplastics.

Lisa Dukart

NEW JERSEY

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Youth sports hiring woes | Inquirer Cherry Hill

Plus, a nonprofit aims to build a school for children with autism.

Laura Smythe

NEW JERSEY



6 teens taken to hospitals after being struck by SUV in Camden County

Lindenwold police responded to the 400 block of East Gibbsboro Road and found six teens had been struck by an SUV that drove up on a sidewalk, police said.

Robert Moran

CRIME & JUSTICE

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Ground beef worth \$40,000 stolen from tractor-trailer in Northeast Philly

While the driver was asleep, three men made off with four pallets of ground beef shortly before 3:45 a.m. Tuesday.

Robert Moran

CRIME & JUSTICE



Police ID man officers killed last week in Mayfair

During a physical confrontation on Frankford Avenue, Officers Thomas Catalano and Christian Nguyen fired their guns, killing 26-year-old Jamir Cave, police said.

Robert Moran

NATION & WORLD

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Christa Pike is conscious and speaking after Tennessee failed execution, her attorneys say

Her attorneys said they are grateful for the first responders and the medical team at the hospital "who treated Christa like a human."

Associated Press, Associated Press

ENERGY



Two Philly-area nuclear plants are increasing power generation as part of a deal with Google

It's part of a deal between Google and Constellation Energy that aims to offset the increasing energy demands of AI data centers.

Erin McCarthy

PENNSYLVANIA POLITICS

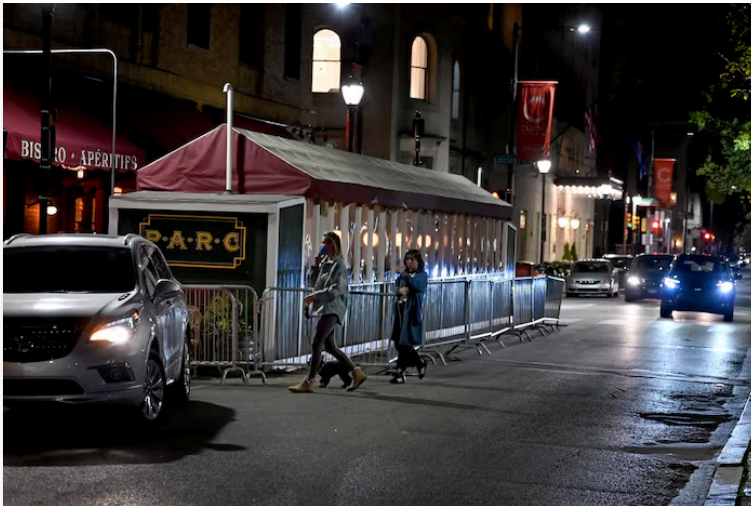
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Pa. lawmaker resigns from committees following alleged homophobic slur against Malcolm Kenyatta

Bernstine has previously denied reports that he used a homophobic slur in reference to the Philadelphia state legislator.

Nick Vadala

FOOD



To boost outdoor dining, Philly has created two government-approved streetery prototypes

The city has created two pre-approved streetery prototypes in an effort make it easier for restaurants to have outdoor dining. Both versions are on display in LOVE Park.

Beatrice Forman

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