

The Philadelphia Inquirer

ALWAYS ASKING. ALWAYS PHILLY.

SPORTS C1

ARRAEZ IS A HIT WITH UNUSUAL ROUTINES



PHILLY & REGION B1

HOW CITY DISTRIBUTED 1 MILLION MEALS TO KIDS THIS SUMMER

PHILLY & REGION B1

TEMPLE TO REQUIRE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS TO LIVE ON CAMPUS NEXT YEAR

LIFE & CULTURE D10

SOUTH PHILLY'S NEW HOT SPOT





Josie Jones (rear, center), director of the KenCrest program in Southwest Philadelphia, leads the Early Head Start group in play. Head Start serves 700,000 low-income children nationwide, including an estimated 7,500 in Philadelphia. Jessica Griffin / Staff Photographer

Philly advocates warn Trump plan could be ‘devastating’ to Head Start

An administration proposal would reduce the number of teachers and mandate English-only instruction.

By Alfred Lubrano
Staff Writer

Like scattered billiard balls, 16 Early Head Start children scampered across a rubber-matted playground in Southwest Philadelphia last week.

Vigilant for tumbles or conflicts, four teachers calmly monitored the 1- and 2-year-olds in their high-energy frolic at an early learning center run by KenCrest, a nonprofit that operates Head Start and other programs in seven neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia.

Head Start’s low ratio of one teacher for every four toddlers is a hallmark of standards for the 61-year-old federal program that provides free education, health,

nutrition, family support, and day-care services for low-income children from birth to age 5.

But now, advocates say, Head Start risks being eviscerated by changes proposed by the Trump administration.

The vaunted teacher-child ratio, along with other foundational principles that make Head Start unique, is being threatened by plans to “deregulate” the program — overhauling the way it operates by eliminating more than 1,400 regulatory mandates that dictate how the program is administered.

“We could be going to two staff members for 25 toddlers and two for 30 older kids,” said Melanie Brennan, executive director of early learning programs at KenCrest.

“What’ll bathroom time look like?”

The Trump administration defends its proposed changes as the building blocks for a better Head Start, which serves 700,000 low-income children nationwide, including an estimated 7,500 in Philadelphia.

“We are removing unnecessary bureaucracy, strengthening nutrition and physical health, trusting parents and local communities,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whose department administers Head Start at the federal level.

That does not ring true to Head Start professionals in Philadelphia.

“It’s laughable to say all they’re trying to do is take away some bureaucracy,” Brennan said. “By ending rules that guide Head Start’s high, uniform standards, the administration’s real goal is to leave the education business.”

In Philadelphia, more than \$70 million in federal funding for Head Start goes through the Philadelphia School District, the program’s largest provider in the city, said Diane Castelbuono, the district’s deputy chief for early learning.

The district uses that money to directly operate Head Start programming in more than 60 school buildings, mostly elementary schools, throughout the city, she said. It also works with approved

contractors who run Head Start classrooms at approximately 75 childcare sites in Philadelphia, Castelbuono added.

Asked for comment on the proposed changes, the school district said in a statement that the Head Start program has “positively impacted” students and that district officials “remain committed to preserving the robust standards that have proven essential to our program’s success.”

‘Stunned and sad’

While only Congress can repeal the statutory authorization for Head Start, which has an annual budget of about \$12 billion, opponents of the Trump administration’s proposal warn the new rules would weaken the program to the point it became unrecognizable — or stopped existing altogether.

The plan, called “Reducing Federal Burden for Head Start Programs,” was released Aug. 7.

Public comment will be accepted

→ SEE HEAD START ON A8

Tariff impasse a sign of deeper rupture

The longtime alliance of the U.S. and Canada has changed dramatically and, one political scientist says, “will never be the same.”

By Rob Gillies
Associated Press

TORONTO — For decades, Canada built much of its prosperity on privileged access to the United States. Now, after the collapse of trade talks, one of the world’s closest and most durable alliances has been fundamentally altered, with both countries facing the risk of a full-scale trade war.

Prime Minister Mark Carney acknowledged the break after last-ditch negotiations failed Friday, saying Canada had recognized that “America has changed” and that the countries would “not return to our old relationship.”

→ SEE CANADA ON A5

How Pa.’s data center guardrails stack up

Gov. Shapiro’s executive order imposes strict requirements on the projects but stops short of a moratorium.

By Gillian McGoldrick
Staff Writer

HARRISBURG — As part of his new, hard-line stance on regulating data centers in Pennsylvania, Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro said during a news conference last week that his sweeping executive order has the “strictest guardrails in the nation” on data center development.

Fact check: That is technically true, if you exclude moratoriums, or the full-stop pauses on development that have been implemented in two other states.

→ SEE DATA CENTERS ON A6

Bloodied, bruised — and last seen at Olney house

A troubling photo of a missing woman was on Raymond Horsch’s porn website months after she disappeared.

By Ryan W. Briggs, Max Marin, and Ellie Rushing
Staff Writers

In September 2023, seven months after Blair Tonzelli was reported missing, a nude photograph of her appeared prominently on a local pornographer’s website.

She is staring at the camera, with what appears to be a black eye and blood running down her lower lip.

While it is unclear when it was taken, Raymond “R.C.” Horsch



Investigators at the Horsch residence on West Chew Avenue in the Olney neighborhood in June. Jessica Griffin / Staff Photographer

first uploaded the picture to his website’s homepage around 2020, sometime after he had met Tonzelli in Kensington, and he used it as one of several lead images on the site for years, according to archived website data reviewed by The Inquirer.

Horsch’s website is now inactive. But it was up and running when Tonzelli’s friends reported her missing in February 2023, telling officers she was last seen at Horsch’s home the previous summer.

Police have not said whether officers ever visited the home or interviewed Horsch about her disappearance — or if they were aware Tonzelli’s nude photo was featured on his public website. Officers raided the home as part of a drug investigation in May 2025, but investigators in that case did not

→ SEE OLNEY ON A4

WEATHER B8

STORMS IN SPOTS
HIGH 85 / LOW 66

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