

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

Successful Schools...Successful Children...Successful Communities

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SCHOOL FUNDING CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR RESTORATION OF STATE FUNDING FOR STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND LONG-TERM PLAN FOR SCHOOL FUNDING FAIRNESS

HARRISBURG—(April 30, 2013)—Members of the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign said today that legislators need to prioritize funding for K-12 student programs and services by approving a \$270 million increase in basic subsidy for 2013-2014, and also make a commitment to a three-year process to restore nearly \$900 million cut from school district funding in each of the past two years.

Cuts included in the past two state budgets have led to larger class sizes, the elimination of programs proven to be successful such as full-day kindergarten and tutoring, and the removal of teachers and support staff who take care of students. The Legislature needs to end this ongoing and very serious funding crisis that is denying many students in Pennsylvania a fair opportunity for a high quality education.

Joe Bard, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools said, "Without significantly increased funding, our schools and our children face a grim future."

"Lawmakers need to understand that decisions they have made in Harrisburg are hurting learning opportunities for students across the state", said Deborah Dunstone, president of Pennsylvania PTA. "In contrast to three years ago, students have lost opportunities for early education, art and music, career-technical programs, foreign languages, AP courses, dual enrollment, school library services, and much more."

Joan Duvall-Flynn, chair of the Education Committee of the NAACP Conference of Pennsylvania, further emphasized that "the dramatic cuts in funds from the state to school districts these past two years were largest for the poorest school districts in the state, and in many places reduced programs such as early education and tutoring help that have a proven record of helping students improve their academic performance."

In addition to calling on the General Assembly and the Governor to begin a three-year budget process to restore the unprecedented cuts in funding for school districts, the Campaign emphasized the need for a funding distribution formula that uses state funding to promote opportunity for all students. "Pennsylvania needs to develop and implement a sound education funding formula that

addresses real classroom costs, meets real student needs, and directs funding to provide equal opportunities for all of our students," said Education Law Center Executive Director Rhonda Brownstein.

The School Funding Campaign also supports, at a minimum, a cost-of-living increase for special education and career-technical education funding to districts, and supports the Governor's proposed increase in the special education contingency fund, provided it is funded with new funds rather than being financed by a cut in district funding as proposed by the Governor.

The Campaign also supports changes to the funding formula for charter schools that will: 1) limit the charges to school districts for students in cyber charter schools to reflect the actual costs of providing instruction; 2) fix tuition rates for special education students in charter schools to reflect actual cost expenditures; 3) eliminate the charter school double dip in the treatment of pension costs in the current calculation of students' tuition rates; and 4) recognize in the tuition formula as legitimate deductions certain costs of districts that are not incurred by charter schools. The Campaign emphasizes that these changes would not require any additional funding from the state.

Lastly, the Campaign calls on state legislators and the Governor to develop a comprehensive plan to guarantee that the students in financially distressed districts have the resources necessary to meet with state's academic standards.

"Statewide polling in each of the past two years shows that the vast majority of Pennsylvanians do not support the major education cuts that have occurred and believe that state government has a major responsibility to assure quality learning opportunities for all students," said Ron Cowell, president of The Education Policy and Leadership Center. "As we leave the recession behind us and the Legislature considers approving additional business tax cuts worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually, it is urgent that state lawmakers give equal consideration to their responsibility to appropriately fund public education."

Michael Churchill, Of Counsel at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, said "The General Assembly is not complying with its obligation under the State Constitution to provide sufficient funding for every district to be able to provide its students with an adequate education."

About the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

The Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations representing hundreds of thousands of parents, students, educators, school board members, administrators and other concerned citizens advocating for adequate and equitable funding of Pennsylvania's public schools. For more information about the Campaign, see www.paschoolfunding.org.

A list of Steering Committee members of the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign is attached.

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