



Council members rally for school funding

Musso and Hill-Evans back Rendell's plan.

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Dozens of city and school officials -- including two York City Council members -- rallied Tuesday with Gov. Ed Rendell to promote his plan to change the way public schools are funded.

York City Council President Joe Musso and Vice President Carol Hill-Evans lent their support to the plan that Rendell wants approved in the state budget that should be approved by July 1.

Rendell is pushing a two-part plan to pump more money into schools, with no tax increase, and to rewrite the state funding formula to give more money to districts with problems such as rapid growth or blight.

Basic-education subsidies would increase next year by nearly 6 percent, or \$291 million, as part of a six-year plan to give schools a \$2.6 billion infusion.

Hill-Evans, city council's liaison to the York City School District, said Rendell's plan would help keep property taxes low while laying the groundwork to improve test scores.

She also said it would ensure programs that have been cut in recent years, such as the arts, would be better funded.

Musso said the multiyear plan would help districts plan ahead to fund the programs they want.

"Any good business will have that -- a five-year plan," Musso said.

Rendell touted his plan as one that would help kids learn while relieving the burden on local property taxes. He said it would change "inadequacies that exist in Pennsylvania depending on the ZIP code where a child is born."

Rendell's plan is based on suggestions made in a study, commissioned by the Legislature, which concluded most school districts spend less than needed to adequately teach each child.

Released last fall, the "costing-out" study found that Pennsylvania spends an average of about \$9,500 per pupil, while \$11,900 is needed to ensure students meet achievement standards.

ON THE WEB

More details about Gov. Ed Rendell's school-funding plan are at www.pde.state.pa.us. Click on "Proposed 2008-09 Education Budget."