

# *Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign*

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

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## **Talking Points April 2010**

- Just as our students are making significant progress in the classroom, we look to our state Senators to continue to make progress for Pennsylvania's students by quickly enacting the budget bill that passed the state House with bipartisan support on March 23.
- It is critical for the state Senate to support the budget bill in order to ensure that necessary investments in public education continue. Everyone understands the challenge of providing adequate funding for education in this difficult economic climate, but if the Senate doesn't approve a budget that includes another \$354 million in state funds for basic education (as the House bill did), Pennsylvania will fail to restore the state funding that was cut last year.
- But let's be clear. The proposed state funding level in the budget passed by the House would only restore the public schools to the same level of state funding received in 2008-09. Any additional money for this year and next year is from the federal stimulus, and those funds will not be available after 2010-11.
- Governor Rendell and the General Assembly have made historic state investments in education over the past seven years, and the investments are showing real results. Our students have recently been recognized nationally for their improvement at all grade levels since 2002. But we are still a long way from having all our students reaching state and national proficiency standards.
- We face a critical moment with the adoption of the 2010-11 state budget. Pennsylvania needs the state Senate to act, and to support the budget bill as adopted by the House so we don't "turn back the clock" on the progress Pennsylvania has made in providing more fair and adequate state funding to schools and local communities, particularly through the creation of the school funding formula enacted in 2008.
- As a result of the new formula, thousands of Pennsylvania's children are benefiting from programs aimed at increasing student achievement – the key to ensuring Pennsylvania's future economic success. Districts are spending the new state money on reforms that research shows will achieve results for students – if those reforms are sustained. These include:
  - Tutoring and increased instructional time for over 560,000 students.
  - Advanced courses and more rigorous programs for almost 407,000 students.

- Pre-K, full-day kindergarten, and smaller class sizes in the early grades for over 24,000 students.
- All children in Pennsylvania deserve a quality education, regardless of the community in which they live. To ensure every student has a fair opportunity to succeed, schools need adequate resources – especially to increase the achievement of those who have the greatest difficulty in learning, such as children from low-income families and English language learners.
- This budget is a pivotal moment. We have a chance to continue the good work we've all been doing to improve student achievement in Pennsylvania and we should not abandon the progress made thus far. We must continue to fight for predictable, adequate, and fair funding for Pennsylvania's public schools.