

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

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School Funding Campaign Asks Legislators not to Turn Back the Clock on School Funding Reform

Harrisburg (July 15, 2009) – The Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign today urged lawmakers to appropriate the full \$418 million increase needed to keep the state on schedule to implement its new school funding formula within six years.

The Campaign is responding to action taken late Monday in the House Appropriations Committee. That committee voted to use \$418 million in federal stimulus funds to reduce the state contribution to the basic education subsidy by \$118 million and provide a \$300 million increase over 2008-09 levels as part of the House Democrats' budget proposal, House Bill 1416.

"We now have two budget bills in play in the House, Senate Bill 850 and House Bill 1416, and both of them would reduce the state's own support of the school subsidy for the first time ever," said Ron Cowell, president of The Education Policy and Leadership Center and spokesperson for the Campaign.

Senate Bill 850 would use a combination of state and federal funds to fund the subsidy at 2008-09 levels, and House Bill 1416 would use the combined funding sources to provide an overall \$300 million increase.

Joseph Bard, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, said, "the General Assembly took a great step forward last year by enacting the first fair and equitable funding formula we've had in two decades. With the availability of federal stimulus funds this year, they should not turn the clock back on their progress."

Cowell added that "in good times and bad, the General Assembly has never before reduced its own commitment to the subsidy, and this is no time to start. Rather, it is a time to appropriate the full \$418 million increase we need to keep on track school funding reform and to fully fund the formula in six years."

The Campaign supported the enactment of the formula last year and supports funding it this year, even if the General Assembly needs to raise additional revenues to meet other budget priorities.

The PSFC 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.