

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

800 North Third Street · Suite 408 · Harrisburg, PA 17102 · 717-260-9900 · www.paschoolfunding.org

For further information contact:
Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign
Ron Cowell, (717) 260-9000, (412) 298-4796 (cell)

Senate Passes State Budget That Would Kill School Funding Reform Efforts

Harrisburg (July 21, 2009) – The amendment to a House-approved budget bill (House Bill 1416) passed yesterday by the Senate would effectively kill the school funding reform effort in Pennsylvania if it becomes law, according to the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign (PSFC).

The Senate's amendment essentially re-wrote the legislation to mirror Senate Bill 850 – the state budget plan previously adopted by the Senate – which provides for a major reduction in state funding for basic education and uses federal stimulus funds to replace the cut in state funds rather than to increase funding for basic education consistent with the 6-year plan for school funding reform.

"I am very disappointed that the Commonwealth seems to be moving away from its commitment to a school funding formula based on real student needs and communities' actual ability to meet those needs," said Stinson Stroup, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Administrators Association. "Failure to make the difficult decision to raise revenue at the state level throws an unequal burden back on students and future property taxpayers. Fair school funding is sacrificed in the Senate-adopted budget."

"The Senate-passed budget will eliminate the progress in school funding reform proposed by Governor Rendell for the next year and instead take us backward, effectively lowering the base of state support for K-12 districts and students by hundreds of millions of dollars for every year in the future," said Ron Cowell, president of The Education Policy and Leadership Center and PSFC spokesman. "Honoring the 6-year school funding reform plan begun only a year ago is urgent because Pennsylvania has had one of the nation's most ineffective and unfair school finance systems, and now the Senate-approved budget would resume our 'race to the bottom' among all the states. New polling released today by Quinnipiac University shows that a majority of Pennsylvanians are willing to pay more in state taxes to avoid cuts in state spending on public schools."

The PSFC urges House members to oppose House Bill 1416 as amended by the Senate. Rather, the Campaign urges policymakers to continue the important progress Pennsylvania has made by maintaining the state's investment in basic education at the current level and supporting the use of \$418 million in stimulus funds to provide the increase needed to achieve the Year 2 funding targets to keep Pennsylvania on track for real education reform and help prevent local property tax increases and program cuts in schools. For more information about the Campaign, visit www.paschoolfunding.org.