

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

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Budget Must Restore State Funding for Basic Education

\$354.8 Million Increase Will Only Bring Us Back to 2008-09 State Funding Level

Harrisburg (June 25, 2010) — The Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign today called upon the General Assembly to put the needs of children first and approve a \$354.8 million increase in basic education aid to schools as budget negotiations seem to be nearing an end.

“In these tough financial times school districts have been forced to tighten their belts by making difficult cuts that adversely affect academic programs and services for students,” said Ron Cowell, President of The Education Policy and Leadership Center.

“Our children are losing access to foreign language classes, having to deal with larger classes and using outdated textbooks, and school districts have made tough decisions to lay off teachers and support staff and limit or completely eliminate afterschool activities such as homework help or tutoring labs,” Kris Newbern, legislation and advocacy chair of the Pennsylvania PTA and a parent from the Jim Thorpe Area School District in Carbon County told a parents’ rally for education at the Capitol Monday. “All of these cuts have a direct negative impact on the education of our children.”

“Districts are taking a balanced approach to budgeting,” said Joseph Bard, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools. In addition to cuts, they are spending one-time sources of revenue (federal stimulus funds and local budgetary reserve funds) and raising tax rates to compensate for declining tax revenues due to the recession, he added.

“Due to last year’s cuts, an additional \$354.8 million in state funding for basic education will only restore us to the level of 2008-09. Anything less will drive us even further behind,” said Bard.

“If we are to emerge from this recession in a position of strength, it will be by riding the coattails of our young people. We should not balance the 2010-11 budget on their backs,” Bard added.

For more information about the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign, see www.paschoolfunding.org.

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