

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

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House Education Committee Takes Positive Step Forward on Education Funding

The House Education Committee today took a positive step forward toward ensuring all students have access to a high-quality education and signaled its commitment to maintaining the critical public education funding reforms enacted last year with the passage of House Bill 1493, according to the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign (PSFC).

House Bill 1493 would distribute basic education funding using the rational and predictable school funding formula adopted by the General Assembly in 2008, which is based on the findings of the state's 2007 Costing-Out Study, with enhancements to improve the formula that will: 1) treat rural districts more fairly; 2) address the financial needs of more districts this year by adjusting the rate at which adequate state funding is phased-in for high taxing and low taxing districts over the remaining five years of the formula's implementation; 3) ensure every district receives a minimum 2% increase, and 4) permit the spending of up to 25% of new money above the inflationary index to maintain existing reforms. The Campaign supports these enhancements to the new school funding formula adopted in Act 61 of 2008.

The legislation will allow the state to fulfill its responsibility for adequately funding public education for all students by using \$418 million in federal economic stimulus funds to increase basic education funding above current levels, thus meeting the year 2 adequacy funding targets of the state's six-year plan to fully implement its new education funding formula.

While the Campaign regrets that the bill was adopted along party lines, we are encouraged that the Committee has taken the lead to advance a positive approach to school funding this spring. "We must not abandon school finance reform only one year after the General Assembly adopted the school funding reform," said Ron Cowell, PSFC spokesman and President of The Education Policy and Leadership Center. "Our economy and our communities depend on our ability to respond and adapt to the circumstances at hand while still upholding the state's Constitutional commitment to public education."

The Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign 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 comprehensive, systemic reform of Pennsylvania's public education funding system. For more information about the Campaign, visit www.paschoolfunding.org.