

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

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Talking Points [February 2011]

- Increased education funding in recent years has led to increased student achievement. From 2003-04 through 2009-10, the percentage of students proficient in math has increased from 57.6% to 76.3%; in reading it has increased from 65.6% to 72.0%. But one-fourth of our students are still not performing at grade level, so more needs to be done.
- Increased funding in recent years has paid for tutoring, increased instructional time, advanced courses, more rigorous programs, full-day kindergarten, pre-K programs, and reduced class size in the early grades.
- Money pays for a quality curriculum and the books and materials that support it; high quality teachers and reasonable class sizes; guidance counselors who help students prepare for their futures by understanding their options and selecting the right courses; meeting the unique needs of certain groups of students, including those with disabilities, those who are learning English, those who are gifted, and those impacted by poverty; professional development to improve the skills of current teachers and administrators; and modern educational technology that helps students learn and prepare for college and the 21st century workplace.
- After 17 years without a systematic approach to funding schools based on student needs, the General Assembly decided in 2008 to develop a fair, equitable, and adequate formula to provide the funding necessary for all students to receive a quality education. The formula was used for the first time in 2008-09. At that time, the legislature also approved a six-year plan to fully-fund the new education formula with an additional \$2.6 billion.
- Following an initial investment of state funds in the first year of the formula, the legislature has used federal funds to provide overall increases while decreasing the state's own commitment of money to support basic education. Since 2007-08, the state contribution to basic education funding has decreased by \$217 million or 4.4 percent. Since the first year of the formula (2008-09), it has decreased by 9.4 percent.
- With the addition of federal Education Jobs funds, as requested by the Corbett Administration, the state's basic education subsidy to its school districts is now dependent on \$1.043 billion in federal funds (including the federal stimulus program and the education jobs program). None of these funds will be available after June 30.
- Proposals for the state's 2011-12 education spending should:
 1. Continue to support the learning needs of the state's children.
 2. Continue to use the state's fair, equitable, and adequate school funding formula.
 3. Guarantee that the state's subsidy to its schools not be reduced from current year state and federal funding levels.

Prepared by the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign, an unprecedented coalition of more than 30 statewide and regional education and advocacy 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 additional information, please go to www.paschoolfunding.org or contact The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC) at 717-260-9900.