

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) 260-9900

Parents Call on Legislators to Support Education in the Budget *Gov. Rendell, Sen. Casey Express Support for Parents' Concerns*

(HARRISBURG, PA) June 21, 2010 – Public school parents from across Pennsylvania rallied at the State Capitol building today to send a message to legislators about the next state budget – we're counting on you to support an additional \$354.8 million in state funding for basic education because our kids can't afford more cuts. The parents' concerns were heard by Governor Edward Rendell and U.S. Senator Bob Casey who joined them at the rally and echoed their support for making sure Pennsylvania does not turn back the clock on progress for its students.

Parents discussed the impact of the difficult budget choices their districts are already making and the added challenges their districts will face if the state budget does not include \$354.8 million in additional state support for basic education.

"Programs that are central to the nurturing of our children – art, music, athletics – are disappearing in our schools," said Joe Ciresi, a parent from the Spring-Ford Area School District in Montgomery County. "With the local revenue losses we are experiencing, our district will need to consider cuts to core services and more cuts to extracurricular activities if the state does not increase its support for education."

"Our children are losing access to foreign language classes, having to deal with larger classes and using outdated textbooks, and school districts have made tough decisions to layoff teachers and support staff and limit or completely eliminate afterschool activities such as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

"I am proposing an increase of \$354 million to continue investing in our education system and ensure our students are on the path of success," Governor Rendell said. "If the General Assembly does not deliver these needed funds, local school districts will be forced to offset the loss of state resources by making even deeper cuts to their academic programs and furloughing teachers."

(MORE)

ADD-1

“Restoring federal aid to the states is critical for Pennsylvania’s teachers and school districts,” said Senator Casey. “It is a vital part of helping Pennsylvania and all states that have been hurt by the recession. That’s why I have been a strong supporter and will continue to fight to ensure we don’t make the strain on Pennsylvania’s teachers and state budget even worse.”

Pennsylvania’s students have been nationally recognized for their improvement at all grade levels since 2002. Thousands of students are benefiting from programs aimed at increasing student achievement as a result of Pennsylvania’s recent school funding reform, but these academic gains are at risk if the reform is not sustained.

“As a result of the improved state education funding, Upper Darby has been able to hire highly qualified teachers, improve data driven instruction and significantly improve student achievement. Without proper state funding moving forward we will be faced with cuts that will undermine our progress and our students’ chance of success,” said Marian Rucci, a parent in the Upper Darby School District in Delaware County.

“I understand the challenge of adopting a state budget in this difficult economic climate, but tough economic times do not justify depriving students of a fair opportunity to succeed,” said Ron Cowell, president of The Education Policy and Leadership Center. “Pennsylvania cannot rely on cuts alone to balance the state budget. We must make the necessary investment in basic education to sustain and increase our students’ success.”

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

###