

COALITION SUPPORTING FMAP EXTENSION

c/o The Education Policy and Leadership Center – 800 N. 3rd St., Suite 408, Harrisburg, PA 17102 – 717-260-9900

July 12, 2010

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Address
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative _____:

While there are some signs of economic recovery around the country, Pennsylvania's school districts are just beginning to suffer the full effects of the recession, and their recovery is weak and uncertain. Local revenue to Pennsylvania's school districts has decreased by \$343 million over the past year. Two-thirds of the state's school districts had to cut instructional personnel and a third also needed to reduce instructional programs for the coming school year in order to balance their 2010-11 budgets.

In recent days, state lawmakers enacted a budget maintaining a strong commitment to education that included a \$250 million increase in public school funding. But this came with cuts to other valuable state programs that support children, including tutoring, pre-K, full-day kindergarten, dual enrollment, and teacher professional development, among others. The increase in state support is significant and appreciated but fails to make up for lost local revenue and does not protect against additional local cuts that will hurt student achievement.

As you know, the Pennsylvania budget was passed assuming a six-month extension of increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP). Nearly 30 states have developed budgets that count on this federal aid.

More teacher jobs and instructional programs that impact the quality of education for Pennsylvania's children are at risk if Congress fails to approve a six-month FMAP extension. **On behalf of our respective organizations that collectively represent the interests of students, parents, school administrators and board members, teachers, and other citizens, we ask that you support the extension of FMAP to states.**

Since February 2009, enhanced FMAP has served as an economic stabilizer in Pennsylvania helping to prevent further job losses, particularly within the health, human services, and education sectors. An extension would help continue this stabilization. Governor Rendell has consistently reported that without the extension of FMAP, another 20,000 state, fire, human services, emergency, and education personnel may lose their jobs. Increased unemployment is the last thing Pennsylvania needs as our economy is just beginning to recover from the deep recession. The loss of more teaching positions will mean larger class sizes, reduced education offerings, and reduced student achievement.

If Congress fails to extend FMAP, Pennsylvania will have to cut another \$850 million out of our recently passed \$28 billion state budget. The General Assembly already had to close a \$1.2 billion deficit to bring our state budget into balance before it was enacted. As advocates for

adequate and equitable school funding, we understand that the Governor and legislative leaders aren't likely to be able to cut much more from the state budget without deeper cuts to education.

As a federal lawmaker, you have a rare opportunity to prevent further state budget cuts for public education by approving the FMAP extension. Pennsylvania's school districts and their students are counting on your support.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A+ Schools – Pittsburgh
AFT – Pennsylvania
Children's Coalition of the Lehigh Valley
Communities in Schools of Pennsylvania
Communities in Schools of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County
Education Law Center
Education Voters Pennsylvania
Good Schools PA
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
Parent Power
Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators
Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators
Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals
Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units
Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools
Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials
Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Pennsylvania PTA
Pennsylvania School Boards Association
Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association
Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches: Education Committee
Pennsylvania State Education Association
Philadelphia Education Fund
Philadelphia Student Union
Public Citizens for Children and Youth
Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia
The Consortium for Public Education
The Education Policy and Leadership Center