

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

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

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PSFC Statement on 2010-11 Budget Agreement

Harrisburg (June 30, 2010) — The Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign today thanked the Governor and legislative budget negotiators for a \$250 million increase in basic education aid to schools in the 2010-11 budget agreement but noted the schools continue to face serious funding shortfalls.

“We appreciate the very difficult economic context in which this budget was negotiated, and we are mindful that many line items, including many education programs, that benefit children and families sustained real cuts,” said Ronald R. Cowell, President of The Education Policy and Leadership Center and a School Funding Campaign spokesperson.

“Without Governor Rendell’s leadership and the agreement of House and Senate leaders, school districts faced having even less state funding, so we are especially appreciative of this increase,” Cowell added.

“We need to recognize,” said Jim Buckheit, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), “that state support of public education was at only 36%, compared with 48% nationally in 2007 when the legislature called for a costing-out study to decide how much state support was needed to help all students achieve the state academic standards. That study showed that schools were under-funded to the tune of \$4.3 billion,” he added.

Jay Himes, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO), noted that the state adopted a new funding formula in 2008-09, which set \$2.6 billion as the state’s share of that under-funding. “Since that first year, state funding for the formula has actually declined by almost \$105 million. This is a far cry from the \$2.6 billion increase the formula was supposed to provide during a six-year phase-in period,” Himes said.

Local revenue shortfalls of \$343 million statewide this year have led to significant cuts in instructional programs and staff, Buckheit noted, and “the availability of federal stimulus funds for 2009-10 and 2010-11 have helped soften the blow, but those funds will not be available any longer, and schools will find themselves in increasingly difficult financial condition beginning next year,” he said.

“The next Governor and General Assembly will have a tough challenge in keeping Pennsylvania on-track to establish a truly adequate and equitable school funding system that preserves and

expands the academic gains our students have made the past few years,” said Cowell. “We look forward to working with them to meet that challenge.”

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

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