



To: Senator Dominic Pileggi
Senator Mike Folmer
Senator Jeffrey E. Piccola
Senator Andrew E. Dinniman

From: James Buckheit, Executive Director, PA Association of School Administrators
Jay Himes, Executive Director, PA Association of School Business Officials

Subject: Senate Bill 612—Furlough Provisions in the School Code

Date: May 16, 2011

The Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) and Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) applaud the Senate for passage of Senate Bill 612. If enacted into law, this change to the School Code will provide flexibility that is critical for schools to control costs in the wake of declining state, local and federal resources.

While we applaud the action to provide schools authority to furlough staff for economic reasons and understand that political expediency required several changes be made to assure approval of the bill, we believe the amendments reduced its potential benefit and may result in some school districts choosing to pursue other cost reduction strategies.

In particular the requirement to furlough those with least seniority produces an undesirable result—a greater number and some of the most effective teachers will have to be furloughed. While we do not advocate furloughs at only the highest end of the pay scale, we do believe there should be local discretion in structuring furloughs to ensure the most effective teachers remain in the classroom, regardless of their years of service.

However we understand that legislating significant changes to long standing practice is not easily obtainable. We do believe that passage of Senate Bill 612 is a significant benefit for schools and we are committed to remedying some of our concerns as the legislative process continues.

We urge members of the General Assembly to revisit in two or three years the use of the state developed performance evaluation system as a factor in determining the basis for furloughing professional staff once that system has demonstrated that it is a fair and reliable tool for evaluating teacher and administrator performance.

We thank you for passage of this legislation. We appreciate the recognition that schools need additional statutory authority to address cost reduction. Furloughs will be a reality and establishing a workable process in the School Code is a vital necessity. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or desire additional information on this important issue. Thank you for your leadership on Senate Bill 612.

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