

Talking Points on the State Budget July 17, 2009

From the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign

- Fully fund the second year of the basic education funding formula. My district and districts all over the Commonwealth budgeted as we have done for more than twenty-five years – we budgeted an increase in basic education funds from Harrisburg.
- Increases in federal ESEA Title I and IDEA funding made available under ARRA are important but do not take the place of increases in formula funding for basic education. Some say they are an increase in basic education funding, but they are not. Consider some important facts around federal stimulus funds for education:
 - Not every school district is eligible for ESEA Title I funds. Fifty districts don't receive any Title I funding.
 - Districts that do receive Title I money cannot use it to support regular school programs but must use it for restricted supplemental programs.
 - For many school districts, use of Title I money isn't allowed for every school building. While it might seem easy to simply move funds around, the US Department of Education has made it quite clear that we cannot use increased Title I funds to pay for past expenditures in order to free up funds for others uses. That would constitute supplantation.
 - All districts will receive some funds from IDEA but these funds are restricted for special education.
 - Increases in Title I and IDEA through the federal stimulus package are designed for one time expenditures and there is no commitment that there will be ongoing appropriations to support these programs.
 - Federal funds come with maintenance of effort requirement. This means that school districts cannot cut local support for education. State and local revenue sources are necessary to support the on-going regular school program.
- If my district doesn't receive an increase in basic education funding, we will be forced to cut (fill in the blanks)
 - *Do not mention filling the gap with reserves – this doesn't help our case!*
- If local revenue has declined, share that fact.
- If local taxes were raised in order to avoid program cuts or prepare for the upcoming pension crisis – share that fact.
- Please don't support a state budget that fails to fully fund the second year of the basic education school funding formula.