

Overview

- **\$1 Billion in Cuts to Our Classrooms.** The Governor's proposed budget would cut more than \$1 billion in funding for our classrooms. No matter how you look at it, the reality is that these cuts will have consequences. They will impact our students, our members, and local property taxpayers.

Key cuts include:

- **Basic Education Subsidy.** \$550 million cut from FY 2010-2011.
- **Accountability Block Grants.** \$260 million cut from FY 2010-2011, totally eliminating the program.
- **School District Reimbursement for Charter School Costs.** \$224 million cut from FY 2010-2011, totally eliminating the program.
- **What \$1 Billion in Cuts Means to Your School.** Go to this link www.psea.org/schoolcuts to see the cuts your school district will experience if the General Assembly approves the Governor's budget proposal. School district cuts range from \$168,000 to \$295 million, with an average reduction of \$2.3 million per school district across the state.
- **What \$1 Billion in Cuts Means for Early Childhood Education.** Because the Governor has proposed to eliminate the \$260 million accountability block grant program, kindergarten programs across the state are at risk. The block grant program was designed to help fund these programs. Without it, those classes and their teachers could be eliminated.
- **What \$1 Billion in Cuts Means to Student Performance.** Pennsylvania's public schools are recognized as national leaders in academic achievement. For the past decade, Pennsylvania has invested in programs that have been proven to work for our students. The results are clear.
 - The Nation's Report Card. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, the Nation's Report Card, NO STATES have statistically significant higher 8th grade reading scores than Pennsylvania. Only six states have significantly higher 4th grade reading scores than Pennsylvania. On the NAEP math tests, only seven states have significantly higher 8th grade math scores than Pennsylvania and only four have significantly higher 4th grade math scores.
 - Gains in All Academic Categories. The Center for Education Policy cited Pennsylvania in 2010 for recording gains in all academic categories from 2002-2008.
 - National and International Comparisons. Pennsylvania students do very well in national and international math comparisons. Pennsylvania's performance ranks above the U.S. average and the averages of 36 of 48 countries in math. It ranked below only that of five Asian jurisdictions (Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Japan).
 - Higher Education. More Pennsylvania students than ever (seven out of ten) are going on to higher education.

Cuts to programs that work will impact the students we serve and could reverse the dramatic academic gains that our schools have achieved.

- **What \$1 Billion in Cuts Means to Your School District's Budget.** Right now, our school districts are already in a funding crisis. They are cutting programs that work, privatizing school services, furloughing teachers and support professionals, and raising property taxes – just to balance their budgets. \$1 billion in cuts to school funding will make a bad situation worse. The bottom line is this: property taxpayers will pay more and our students will get less.
- **Statewide Salary Freezes.** The Governor has asked that all school employees take a one-year salary freeze. PSEA members recognize the importance of shared sacrifice. School districts have already laid off hundreds of school employees in anticipation of the Governor's proposed budget.

In his budget proposal, the Governor clearly acknowledged that decisions about salary freezes are made “at the local level.” Before any local association places such a request in front of its membership, the school district should have a clear plan showing steps the district has taken and how any savings would save jobs and benefit student instruction.

- **Policy Proposals, Controversial Ideas, and the Beginning of a Discussion.** In addition to the Governor's budget proposal, he has also announced a number of other ideas that impact our schools, our jobs, and our communities. These are ideas and not full proposals. We are concerned about many of them. However, we are looking forward to having a constructive, reasoned, and deliberate dialogue with the Governor and the General Assembly as these ideas take shape.

Some of these ideas include:

- Elimination of State Support for Master's Salary Increases. No state subsidy to pay school employees beyond the bachelor's column.
 - Private and Religious School Vouchers. Diverting tax dollars to private and religious school tuition.
 - Economic Furloughs. Allowing school districts to furlough school employees for factors other than seniority.
 - Property Tax Referenda. Voter approval for any property tax increase over inflation at the school district level.
 - Merit Pay. Providing state resources to guide local districts in the development of merit pay plans.
 - Lowering Standards. The governor's proposal lowers standards to become a teacher or a school nurse.
- **PSEA Is A Partner in Good Public Policy.** The Governor's proposed budget, policy proposals, and the ideas he has attached to it are a starting point for conversations. PSEA has a long and well-earned reputation as a partner with the General Assembly in dialogues about education policies that work for our students and as a strong voice against ideas that don't.

In the coming months, we will continue conversations with the Governor, legislators, and policymakers to help shape this debate. At the forefront of these dialogues, we will continue to advocate for our students, our schools, our educators, and our communities – working to ensure that we contribute to the very best public education policy we can achieve.