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August 13, 2025

The Honorable Tracy Pennycuik
56 W. 4th Street Floor 2
Red Hill, PA 18076

Dear Senator Pennycuik:

I write to you on behalf of the 177,000 members of PSEA to ask that you stand up for our public schools—where nearly 90 percent of Pennsylvania students learn—and do everything you can to get a real budget across the finish line.

The state budget is now more than seven weeks overdue, and our schools and students are beginning to feel the impact. Schools have already missed their July payment from the state, and the August payment will be missed in just a matter of days. Our schools are starting the year without \$1.75 billion in expected state funding as a result of this impasse. That is unacceptable considering we have over \$7 billion in the rainy day fund.

Perhaps even worse, the president pro tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate, whom you elected to lead your caucus, recently stated that she is withholding the state budget until the House and Governor Shapiro agree to her demand to send millions of public tax dollars to private and religious schools. Let me be 100 percent clear: our students are not bargaining chips in budget negotiations, nor are they pawns in some grand scheme to force school vouchers on the taxpayers of Pennsylvania. School vouchers have proven to be expensive failures everywhere they have been tried. We do not need to repeat others' mistakes in Pennsylvania.

The budget passed by the Senate in SB 160 on August 12th is not a serious effort to resolve this emerging crisis. By providing no increase in funding for schools and taking no steps to address the court-ordered funding remedy to address adequacy and equity in our most underfunded schools, lawmakers have turned their backs on Pennsylvania's 1.7 million public school students.

It is time to move beyond the extreme ideological rhetoric and pass a real budget. Please talk to your leaders and urge them to call the Senate back to Harrisburg and complete the budget, so schools can start the school year without concerns about additional political chaos impacting their work.

Sincerely,

Aaron F. Chapin
President, PSEA

The PSEA Mission

We are members who promote, protect, and advocate for our schools, students, and professions.

Affiliated with the National Education Association