



## The Campaign for Fair Education Funding Proposes Funding System to Ensure Quality Education for All Students

HARRISBURG (FEBRUARY 26, 2015) – The Campaign for Fair Education Funding today proposed a student-driven funding formula for basic education that strategically directs resources to students and school districts with the greatest needs and provides the investment necessary to enable every child to succeed academically.

The campaign's proposed formula could boost student outcomes in all parts of the state by helping to close funding shortfalls, improve equity, and ensure accountability and efficiency.

"Pennsylvania is just one of three states that does not have a predictable funding formula for basic education. It changes every single year and students in every district are paying a price for the uncertainty," Joan Benso, President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, one of the founding members of the campaign.

"The campaign's mission is to ensure that every public school student has access to a quality education no matter where they live and to make that happen we need to fundamentally change how public schools are funded. That starts with a sustainable, predictable and long-term funding formula."

The campaign, an unprecedented coalition of educators, faith-based organizations, children's advocates, business leaders, and representatives of charter schools, and rural, urban and growing school districts across the commonwealth, developed its proposal based on real costs necessary for all students to meet state academic standards and using current, verifiable data.

The formula is driven by several critical student factors, such as the number of students in poverty and the number learning English; and several school district factors, including local tax effort, school district size and charter enrollment.

The formula also guarantees districts a minimum increase in the level of state funding each year, in order to support school districts faced with fixed costs despite reduced student enrollment. The proposed formula calls for approximately \$3.6 billion in new state investments in public education – an amount that would be phased in over six to eight years. That equates to approximately \$450 million annually in new funding in an eight-year period.

The campaign is hopeful its proposed funding formula will help improve Pennsylvania's school funding vision for fiscal 2015-16 and beyond.

"Our members agree that more resources are needed for our public schools. But our campaign also is focused on establishing a predictable funding formula that distributes those funds equitably. Right now,

we do not have a real system for funding our schools making it impossible for districts to effectively plan,” said Joe Bard, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, a campaign partner.

“Increased funding and a predictable formula are critically important but they must be accompanied by accountability and efficiency. Our campaign is deeply committed to being good stewards of public funds. We are advocating for a system that is transparent and that includes accountability standards to ensure that schools invest efficiently and effectively to boost student achievement,” said Carey Harris, executive director of A+ Schools, a Pittsburgh based community alliance for public education, and a campaign partner.

The campaign’s proposed solution to the state’s school funding problem follows the release of a school district survey by two campaign members, the PA Association of School Administrators (PASA) and the PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO), which found that Pennsylvania schools have experienced unprecedented reductions in academic programs and school staff over the last few years, with more anticipated for next school year.

The survey found that almost 75 percent of districts reported cutting at least one academic program since 2010-11; and a majority of districts reported at least one round of class size increases since 2010-11. The report also found that state funding hasn't kept pace with rising costs.

“Our current education funding system is broken, and it’s hurting our kids,” said Bishop Dwayne Royster, Executive Director of the faith-based group POWER, a campaign partner. “It’s time we come together around a solution that positions all of our children for success,” added Royster, a parent in the Norristown Area (Montgomery County) School District.

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