

Good afternoon.

I serve as the assistant executive director for the Pennsylvania Principals Association. We have nearly 3,800 members who serve as principals and other educational leaders all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to my work with PA Principals, I served as a building principal, assistant superintendent, and for the last ten years a school superintendent. So, I fully understand the frustration, concern, and anxiety of our educational leaders as they make every effort to keep the lights on in their schools in order to educate the children under their charge.

It is an understatement to say that all of our members are very disappointed with what they have been experiencing for the past several months. Many of our principals across the Commonwealth are reporting that the budget impasse has had a very negative impact on their students. The lack of funding has caused their schools to reduce materials, supplies, and eliminate educational experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. And, in particular, the schools with the most disadvantaged children have been hit the hardest. Let that sink in.....those students who are more impoverished and needy have had to bear the brunt of the budget shutdown that has been imposed by our government leaders.

The education of Pennsylvania's youth is a constitutional mandate imposed upon the General Assembly. To date, the General Assembly is receiving a failing grade for their lack of productivity and seemingly lack of effort. To wait this long for a state budget is simply, from a school principal's perspective, bad behavior.

Can we just take a moment and talk about the future? Let's look forward twenty years....to 2035. I'm guessing that the vast majority of elected government leaders who currently work here will not be in office at that time. And, the current students in our schools will be ages 26 to 38.....they will be a part of the workforce. Need I remind everyone of the direct correlation between a quality workforce and a quality education? No, most legislators will not be here in twenty years. But, today, Pennsylvania legislators can impact the future workforce and economy of this Commonwealth by passing a pro-education budget.

When I was an 8th grade student, we studied Pennsylvania History. We learned all about the geography, economics, climate, and history of our fine Commonwealth. I also enjoyed learning about all of the great Pennsylvania statesmen.....many of whom worked right here in this building. The budget impasse that has taken place during recent months has made me ask the question...where have all the statesmen gone?

By definition, a statesman possesses wisdom and skill in the management of public affairs. And one who is widely respected. Clearly, this seems to be a glaring missing piece. Now, more than ever, we need leadership and statesmanship....and we need it now.

The Pennsylvania Principals Association respectfully requests that the women and men of the General Assembly...in particular, the House, rise above politics, rise above partisanship in order to pass a state budget that provides the previously agreed upon \$350 million increase in basic education funding. Please demonstrate leadership, statesmanship, and courage. Pennsylvania's children cannot and should not have to wait any longer. Thank you.