

A Look at the Governor's Budget

Governor Corbett recently released the details of his proposed state budget for 2012-2013. The Governor's budget is functionally the jumping off point for budget negotiations in the state legislature, and aside from acting as financial document, this proposal is really a statement of priorities. Below are 7 facts about the Governor's budget related to education that you need to know.

- As point of context, remember that public education was cut by over \$900 million this year and none of those cuts are being restored in the Governor's proposal for next year.
- The Administration says that education is getting an increase, but funding is actually decreasing. They are saying that the "basic education" subsidy is higher than it has been, BUT that is because it now includes several items that were previously counted separately these include transportation costs, social security payments for employees, and employee pensions (mandatory). These have no bearing on instruction or increasing student achievement. This kind of shifting line items/accounting gimmick doesn't tell the real story. The real story is that we are facing another year with nearly \$1 billion less going to our students.
- This is not a problem caused by the loss of stimulus money.. The Administration has said many times that the only loss of funding for public school is federal stimulus money that was used in the past and is now gone; however, if you look at the 08-09 budget (last pre-stimulus budget) and the current proposal (first post-stimulus budget) public schools would still receive over \$351 million less than they did in 08-09.
- This budget seeks to eliminate the remaining \$100 million from the Accountability Block Grant, which is used by many school districts to fund full day kindergarten and tutoring for struggling students. This grant was already cut this year from \$250 million to \$100 million: this proposal would eliminate it entirely. Pre-K Counts and Head Start are also being cut by 5% each.
- The PA State System of Higher Education received a 20% cut and the state related schools received a 30% cut. Our state schools, especially, provide an affordable option for post-secondary education for millions of Pennsylvanians, and having an educated workforce is imperative if we are going to get our economy back on track. With these cuts, tuition rates (which are already quite high in PA) will continue to increase, and at the same time the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency is being cut by \$10 million.
- Amidst rapidly increasing costs, special education is being flat funded for the 5th year in a row, which is an effective decrease since costs increase every year.
- Given the formula that is being used, all of these cuts are falling disproportionately on the poorest school districts in the Commonwealth.

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