

#2696

Resolution Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to Approve a 2009-10 State Budget that Maintains Adequate and Equitable Education Funding

WHEREAS, emerging from the national recession requires that Pennsylvania make smart choices today that improve the ability of our students to compete in the high-skills global economy and avoid local property tax hikes that will hurt families and senior citizens who are experiencing tough economic times, and that; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides Pennsylvania with significant resources to invest in basic education to accelerate academic improvement, stop program cuts and eliminations, and prevent staff layoffs that would otherwise occur as local revenue has fallen; and

WHEREAS, the Boyertown Area School District met its mandate to pass a budget on time and approved its budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year on June 2, 2009; and

WHEREAS, because the Pennsylvania General Assembly did not pass a state budget before June 30, school districts had to estimate the amount of state funding that they would receive; and

WHEREAS the Boyertown Area School District presumed that the Pennsylvania General Assembly would appropriate at least \$300 million for school districts in the basic education subsidy since that is what Governor Rendell first proposed in February and for more than two decades the funding level proposed by the Governor in February has been a minimum funding level that school districts receive in the state budget; and

WHEREAS, several budget proposals reduced funding for valuable educational programs – in addition to the basic education subsidy – and including the Accountability Block Grant program, Dual Enrollment, charter school reimbursement and Pre-K Counts; and

WHEREAS, the Boyertown Area School District will be forced to raise taxes and reduce staff if the basic education subsidy is not increased by at least \$300 million using stimulus dollars and the Accountability Block Grant is not funded at the same level as the 2008-2009 fiscal year, and

WHEREAS, the Boyertown Area School District has taken proactive cost-cutting measures to reduce expenses by \$695,958, even before the board of directors adopted its final budget, and those cuts include reduction in programs and services and reassignment of teaching positions; and

WHEREAS, the Boyertown Area School district is losing approximately \$1,000 per day due to the lack of State funding received producing an unfavorable variance on many budget areas that will have a negative impact on future District budgets, and

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PA. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, rolling-back state funding for basic education will create a fiscal crisis for school districts and that impact will be felt in the years to come by students and property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, rolling-back state funding for basic education and using stimulus dollars to level fund basic education would mean that Pennsylvania abandons its first basic education funding formula in almost two decades and essentially abandons the principles of adequacy and equity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has indicated that Pennsylvania will jeopardize its competitive position to gain access to the 'Race to the Top' discretionary grants dollars if the Commonwealth "disproportionately reduced its education budget and/or" if Pennsylvania does "nothing more than backfill budget holes" with stimulus funds; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates such as prevailing wages for construction projects, multi-prime construction projects, and poor planning of the PSERS' employer contribution rates, cause an undue economic burden to all school districts in the commonwealth, and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Boyertown Area School District calls on the General Assembly to enact a 2009-10 budget that does all of the following:

1. Increases basic education funding by at least \$300 million so school districts can meet Year 2 funding targets;
2. Keep Pennsylvania on track for real education reform by maintaining the commitment to the basic education funding formula; and
3. Maintain the state's investment in public education by not rolling-back state funds in the basic education subsidy.
4. Maintain the funding level in the Accountability Block Grant.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be submitted to all local newspapers and television stations, to the Boyertown Area School District's elected Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly, the members of the Education Committee, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania.



Enacted September 22, 2009
at Boyertown, Pennsylvania

President
Board of School Directors