



## Education Receives Its Due in Budget

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During a year in which the governor advanced multiple ambitious spending priorities, public education received its due in the 2007-08 budget, passed this week. The General Assembly ultimately supported the education plan put forth by the governor in his February budget address.

### **Highlights of the 2007-08 education budget include:**

- The Basic Education Funding – the single largest source of state subsidy to school districts – is increased by 3.5% increase (\$167 million), bringing it to \$4.95 billion. Special Education is increased by 3.0% (\$29.4 million), for a total of \$1.01 billion.
- Within the Basic Education Funding subsidy are designated funds for high poverty districts, growing school districts, small district assistance, and limited English proficiency students. For the third year in a row, the subsidy also includes an earmark for “foundation” funding, helping to establish the principle – without guaranteeing the implementation – that every school district should have a level of resources that allows it to provide a high-quality education to every student.
- The budget also establishes an important foothold in early childhood education, dedicating \$75 million to enroll 11,000 children in the new Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program, and \$20 million to make full-day kindergarten available to even more school districts. Meanwhile, the Accountability Block Grant is further expanded by \$5 million, and Head Start is maintained at \$40 million.
- Classrooms for the Future – piloted in 2006-07 to bring laptops to high school students -- is increased by \$70 million, bringing the total for the program to \$90 million. The budget also includes \$11 million to train teachers how to shift from textbooks and blackboards to the electronic classroom.
- In keeping with the interest of lawmakers and citizens to ensure schools are operating as efficiently as possible, the state budget dedicates \$1 million to a new “Common Cents” initiative that will provide expert advice to school districts exploring voluntary shared services.

We want to thank all of our advocates for sending postcards, emailing your legislators, and coming with us to Harrisburg on June 5th to speak up for public education. Your actions helped make education a priority in the '07-08 education budget.