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PA School Funding Coalition Supports Increased Investment for Public Schools in State Budget, Says More Work is Needed

HARRISBURG, PA (June ##, 2019) --- *PA Schools Work*, a non-partisan coalition of organizations representing the state's urban, suburban and rural communities, issued the following statement regarding the 2019-20 PA Budget:

"The governor and legislature came together to pass a state budget that boosts public school funding, an increase that is desperately needed. We're particularly pleased with the historic \$50 million increase in special education funding for students with disabilities, which is the largest bulk increase for special education to date, and the \$10 million increase for career and technical education, the second in two years after several budgets with flat funding.

"We are disappointed that the legislature, though increasing basic education funding by \$160 million through the state's fair funding formula, did not adopt the entire amount proposed by the governor. At best, this budget keeps many schools from falling further behind, but does not make progress toward getting all students what they truly need.

"Budget drafters in the state House shifted existing funds from the School Employees' Social Security line item to the Basic Education Funding line in this budget, which could present a misleading picture, overstating the true size of this year's increase.

"Despite the increased investment in public schools this year, Pennsylvania's share in funding schools still be one of the lowest in the country, and local taxpayers are shouldering the burden of providing most of the funding for public schools. Because of this, the gap between wealthy and poor schools is among the widest of all the states. Years of underinvestment by the state has left schools \$3 billion short in basic education and more than a \$1 billion short in special education.

"The longer that we delay the equitable and adequate funding of our public schools, the more Pennsylvania students - and the Commonwealth - suffer. PA Schools Work's member organizations vow to continue working to convince lawmakers to find a permanent solution to the state's chronic school funding problem."

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