



## GROVE CITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

# NEWSLETTER

DR. ROBERT M. POST, SUPERINTENDENT

MAY 2011

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED EDUCATION BUDGET ON YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Actions in Harrisburg have real consequences for children and youth. As a direct result of the Governor's proposed disinvestment in education, the Grove City Area School Board approved a Proposed Final Budget for 2011-2012 that will unfortunately limit educational opportunities for our community's children and youth. The Proposed Final Budget, if adopted in June, would reduce school district expenditures from this year by \$564,274 and raise real estate taxes by one mill to 56.5 mills. The school board cannot raise real estate taxes by more than one mill this year even if the school board wanted to due to State Law. Therefore, without additional funds provided by our legislators, the consequences of the Governor's Proposed Budget are losses of:

1. One administrative position
2. Twelve teaching positions
3. One full-time reading coach
4. One part-time reading coach
5. All after-school and summer school tutoring programs, except Title I
6. Two full-day kindergarten programs
7. All new technology
8. All new textbooks and associated materials and equipment
9. All Ameri-Corps service providers

The Governor appears to be standing firm on his proposed disinvestment in education despite its unpopularity, opposition from the legislators, the increasing reported State surplus and the current relatively low State share of public education funding. According to Philly.com, Chris Borick, a political science professor at Muhlenberg College who analyses Pennsylvania politics said, "This is one of the most crucial moments in educational policy that Pennsylvania has had in quite some time."

The Governor's proposed school cuts have generated a lot of interest. Pittsburgh's Tribune-Review stated on April 6, 2011 that "Education tops list of voters' concerns". The Post-Gazette.com website reported that 78% of respondents opposed most or all of the Governor's education proposals. A Franklin and Marshall College poll found, "Republicans and Democrats are also united in opposition to Corbett's call for a \$1 billion cut in state spending for public schools. Seventy percent of voters in his own party oppose a cut in funding and 85% of Democrats say they're against it".

Pennsylvania's State share of education funding is already relatively low, which causes local real estate taxes to increase. Our State's current share (36%) is well below the national average (48%). The Commonwealth's share is also lower than our surrounding states. If the Governor's proposed education cuts are enacted our State share of the costs of community schools will drop even lower.

The good news is that there is a growing State budget surplus. The Governor's original estimate was that the State would have a \$78 million surplus at the end of the state's fiscal year which ends in June. The Senate Democrats predicted a \$300 million State end of year surplus in April. The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue recently reported a \$506 million surplus.

Many State legislators are reportedly determined to restore some of the Governor's proposed cuts. House Bill 1485 for example, would restore some of the cuts. This is very good news yet much more work needs to be done. The table below illustrates the inequitable effect of HB1485 on children who happen to live in two very different school districts.

	<b>2010-11 Education Subsidies</b>	<b>2011-12 HB1485 Proposal</b>	<b>% Cut</b>
Grove City Area	\$9,808,212	\$8,655,034	12%
Radnor Township	\$3,466,502	\$3,389,064	2%

\*Source: House Appropriations Committee, William F. Adolph Jr. Chairman

HB1485 would restore approximately 90% of the Governor's proposed cuts for the Radnor Township School District which is a relatively wealthy school district. HB1485 would restore only 10% of the Governor's proposed cuts for the Grove City Area School District which is much less wealthy. Radnor could easily absorb a proposed 2% cut in subsidy. Grove City Area would still have to eliminate many educational opportunities for children. This inequity begs the question, are Grove City's children any less important than Radnor's? I think not! Hopefully our local legislators will work hard to make sure our students receive fair and equitable treatment in the State budget, as they have worked hard for our students in the past.

A budget is a written statement of commitment to priorities. You can be part of the budgetary process by making your priorities known to your local legislators. The quality of educational opportunities we provide to your children matters a great deal in equipping them for successful futures. However, the opportunities we can provide is very much dependent upon fiscal support from our Commonwealth. If you believe education is important in the lives of children, please call your legislator now.

Senator Robert Robbins  
259 Main Street  
Greenville, PA 16125  
724-588-1323

Rep. Dick Stevenson  
234 W. Pine Street  
Grove City, PA 16127  
724-458-4911

Rep. Michelle Brooks  
100 Hadley Road  
Greenville, PA 16125  
724-588-8911