



March 17, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

We are writing to you to share an urgent message – *please do not allow any public school in Pennsylvania to close.*

Today you will be receiving House Bill 1801, a supplemental spending bill that appropriates an additional \$3.1 billion for basic education. Taken with the remaining monies authorized under Act 10-A of 2015, these funds would give the Commonwealth's public schools a total of \$10.74 billion in support for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

While we recognize your sincere desire to increase the funding for schools beyond the substantial increases we have already provided, we are severely troubled by comments recently made by your spokesperson, who, in referring to a meeting you had with House and Senate Democrats, is reported to have said the following:

From what I understand from the people on our staff who were there, he [the Governor] was asked about schools closing and his response was that schools are going to close. If we do not get a final budget that does the things he's been fighting for, schools are going to close soon. "Wolf's promised budget bill vetoes could run into problems," *Capitolwire*, March 16, 2016.

Governor, we have an obligation to *prevent*, not invite, school closures.

Article III § 15 of the Pennsylvania Constitution requires the General Assembly to, "provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth."

As members of the General Assembly, we have discharged that duty by appropriating necessary resources in support of our schools. Act 10-A, coupled with House Bill 1801, not only meets the funding provided in 2014-15, but increases contributions to Pennsylvania's public schools by \$200 million. These appropriated amounts most assuredly meet our Constitutional requirements as well as avert the unspeakable result of a school closure.

Governor, you not only have the power to prevent a school closure, you have the responsibility to keep our schools open. When sufficient funds are available, they should be used so that the lives of students, parents and educators are not unnecessarily disrupted.

As such, we implore you not to ignore the realities of a decision to veto House Bill 1801 or line item veto the authorized funding for education in this legislation. While there have been honest disagreements over the 2015-16 budget, our duty to not hurt children, parents and educators demands that you authorize this critical funding to avert a true crisis.

If there is any hope for our Republic, we must demonstrate that we will not put people in harm's way to achieve our goals. While we would very much like to see issues such as public sector pension reform and liquor privatization enacted, we have agreed to put those aside, for now, in favor of meeting the immediate needs of our people and schools.

History will most assuredly judge your decision, as it will the votes we cast.

Please do not be the first Governor in modern Pennsylvania history to have monies available to keep school doors open, but who elects, *for whatever reason*, to allow a school to close.

Instead, we invite you to join us in demonstrating to the people of Commonwealth that notwithstanding our disagreements over taxes and spending, we will support our children, parents and educators.

Sincerely,



RYAN P. AUMENT
State Senator
36th Senatorial District



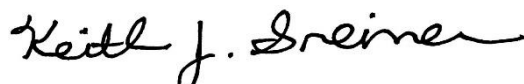
LLOYD K. SMUCKER
State Senator
13th Senatorial District



BRYAN CUTLER
State Representative
100th House District



MINDY FEE
State Representative
37th House District



KEITH J. GREINER
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43rd House District



DAVID S. HICKERNELL
State Representative
98th House District



STEVEN C. MENTZER
State Representative
97th House District



BRETT R. MILLER
State Representative
41st House District



DAVID H. ZIMMERMAN
State Representative
99th House District

cc: Pedro Rivera, Secretary, Department of Education
Lancaster County Superintendents
Lancaster County School Board Directors