



PRESS RELEASE

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PA Chamber applauds Gov. Tom Corbett for making education reform a priority

Says change from status quo will benefit Pennsylvania students

HARRISBURG, PA – The **Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry** today said the education reform plan unveiled by Gov. Tom Corbett and embraced by many state lawmakers is a welcome change of pace from the philosophy that merely spending more will equate to better outcomes, and one that will ensure a quality public education system for all students.

“Academic achievement has not matched the money spent on education in the Commonwealth, which has increased beyond the rate of inflation over the past two decades even as student enrollment has declined,” PA Chamber President Gene Barr. “This is a poor return on investment for our young people, as well as for taxpayers.”

Barr said for fiscal and competitiveness reasons, the answer to improving the education system can’t be to spend more.

“It is time for a new approach to ensure that all children have access to a quality education; ensure that the best teachers are in the classroom; and ensure that children are prepared for success once they graduate.”

Barr said competition offered by an expansion of the successful Educational Improvement Tax Credit program and the creation of opportunity scholarships will offer hope to students stuck in failing districts, helping to boost overall student achievement and quality of education.

In addition, both teachers and their students will benefit from a more accountable teacher evaluation system that not only appropriately assesses the level of instruction being provided by teachers, but better targets resources, support and feedback so that educators can improve their skills to better serve children in their classroom.

Barr said the governor’s proposal and many similar reforms being advanced by state lawmakers will improve and enhance Pennsylvania’s public education system.

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“In a global economy where Americans face competition at every corner, the business community recognizes that an effective, quality public education system is more important now than ever before and is a cornerstone of economic security,” Barr said. “Today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders and tomorrow’s workforce. Job creators have a vested interest in making sure the public education system works for all students; we believe the plan outlined by the governor will achieve that goal.”

Barr said PA Chamber members welcome the opportunity to work with the Corbett administration and state lawmakers to infuse new thought into public education in the Commonwealth.

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The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry is the state’s largest broad-based business advocacy association, with its membership comprising businesses of all sizes and across all industry sectors. The PA Chamber is The Statewide Voice of Business™.