



# PARTNERS POST

Our Schools • Our Communities • Our Future

Your Partners for Public Education Newsletter

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## School districts to invest additional state funding in classroom

School districts across Pennsylvania plan to use additional state funding in the 2015-2016 budget to support high-quality early childhood education, reduce class sizes, and hire back teachers and other staff who were laid off as a result of budget cuts.

Gov. Tom Wolf asked school districts to explain how they will use the additional \$400 million he wants to allocate in basic education funding. More than 90 percent of districts responded with plans to invest the money directly in classrooms.

The Allentown School District, for example, plans to "hire more full-day kindergarten teachers, restore related arts teachers at the elementary and middle schools, purchase new math programs aligned with the Pennsylvania Core Standards and add professional development," according to an Allentown Morning Call report.

"My proposed budget offers an important opportunity for districts to do a comprehensive review of their needs and focus on education as a foundation for long-term economic growth," Gov. Wolf said.

The Wolf administration recently reported how school districts plan to use the additional state dollars:

- 197 school districts will use the funding to maintain or expand high-quality early childhood education or pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs.
- 98 school districts will apply the funding toward reducing class sizes in elementary school classes.
- 87 school districts will restore programs and personnel that districts were forced to eliminate as a result of massive cuts over the past four years. Districts will bring back guidance counselors and librarians and restore extra-curricular programs designed to enhance learning outside the classroom.

The governor's plan, including passage of a natural gas drilling tax, is expected to bring in more than \$1 billion in new revenue by 2017.



## Making sense of the state budget process

Pennsylvania's governor and General Assembly are constitutionally required to do only one thing each year: Adopt a budget. This spending plan for the state allocates how much funding each department and agency will be given to carry out key services and programs, including the operation of public schools.

In March, Gov. Wolf outlined his budget priorities for the fiscal year running July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Lawmakers have held a series of public hearings with the heads of state departments and agencies, as well as the governor's budget secretary, on the various aspects of the Wolf spending plan.

Ultimately, lawmakers and the governor have to craft and adopt a budget on which they can agree. Discussions between a governor's administration and legislative leaders often begin in the spring and intensify in June.

# Five things you need to know about Gov. Wolf's budget

Gov. Tom Wolf's budget invests an additional \$500 million in public school classrooms — \$400 million for basic education and \$100 million for special education — and another \$120 million in early childhood education. It also raises \$3.8 billion to reduce property taxes by 50 percent for the average homeowner.

Our latest infographic offers a quick and easy rundown of what Gov. Wolf's budget plan does for public education.

## Money matters

### Investments in public schools make a difference

The quality of our public schools can influence crime rates, housing needs, health issues, business development, and cultural engagement — all of which are critical to Pennsylvania's social and economic vitality.

Unfortunately, Pennsylvania ranks 45th in state support for public schools, meaning school districts must rely primarily on property taxes to fund public schools — a situation that has been exacerbated in recent years by a nearly \$1 billion cut in state funding for public education.

Substantial differences in districts' abilities to raise resources locally create significant differences in the opportunities students have to succeed academically. State funding plays a critical role in equalizing those opportunities for all students, regardless of their zip codes.

Money matters in education. Schools with adequate resources are better able to provide a safe environment, quality teachers, smaller class sizes, individualized learning, and opportunities for enrichment.

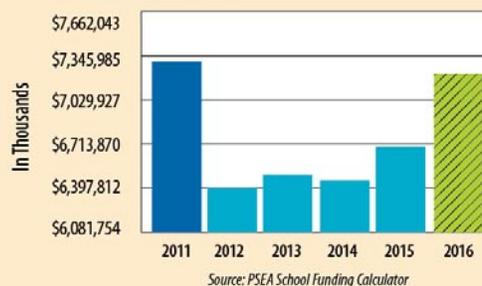
## Gov. Tom Wolf's 2015-16 budget makes a historic investment in public education.

### 5 things you need to know about Gov. Wolf's budget

1. **\$500 million** in state funding is restored to public school classrooms.
2. Pennsylvania children will have **expanded access to early education**.
3. The average homeowner will get a **50 percent cut in property taxes**.
4. The governor is committed to writing a **fair school funding formula**.
5. A **fair tax on drillers** will allow Pennsylvania to invest in student learning.

### Gov. Wolf's plan reverses years of education underfunding in Pennsylvania

His budget proposes the largest one-year school funding increase in Pennsylvania's history.



### Partner Benefits Spotlight: Partners can road trip for less

Planning any road trips this summer? Need to rent a car? Book a hotel? Find discounts at restaurants and diners on the road? **Partner Benefits** has you covered. Visit the **Partner Benefits** page and sign in to Access. Select "Car Rental" to save with Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, Thrifty, and more. Select "Hotel" to save at major hotel chains across the country. And select "Dining & Food" to find a variety of savings at fast food and sit-down restaurants along your route. Happy road-tripping.



### About Partners for Public Education

*Partners for Public Education* is working to provide you with resources about public education in Pennsylvania because we are committed to the success of every child. It is brought to you by the *Pennsylvania State Education Association*, an organization made up of the dedicated employees in your Pennsylvania public schools.

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