



PARTNERS POST

Our Schools • Our Communities • Our Future

Your Partners for Public Education Newsletter

www.partnersforpubliced.org



Parent engagement has significant impact on student achievement

The research is clear: Parental, family, and community involvement in education has an effect on both academic performance and school improvement. Students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher-level programs. This issue features resources to help you stay involved in your children's education.

What to ask during parent-teacher conferences?

We asked professionals who work in Pennsylvania schools to recommend questions for parents and guardians to ask in order to have productive parent-teacher meetings.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- How are my child's grades and attitude? What can I do to assist my child?
- *Jodie, high school art teacher, Erie Education Association*
- How well is my child understanding the concepts taught in class? How can I support my child to help him/her be successful in school? - *Heather, instructional coach, Association of Mifflin County Educators*
- What are my student's strengths and weaknesses? What resources are available to help my child do better? - *Nancy, high school teacher, Greater Johnstown Education Association*
- How do you, the teacher, prefer to be contacted? How much homework should the students expect to see on a regular basis? - *Michelle, English teacher, Northampton Education Association*
- What are some positives you see in my child? I'd like to share a positive with my child that came from you. How can I deepen my child's enrichment, remediation, character, or individual strengths? - *Cynthia, English-as-a-Second-Language teacher, West Chester Education Association*



American parents believe in public schools

What grade would you give the public schools in your own community?



67%
of parents
gave their children's public schools an
A or B grade

Source: 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, September 2014

The parents of American public school students are strong supporters of their children's schools. Nearly seven in 10 gave their child's school an A or a B grade, according to an annual poll by PDK/Gallup gauging American attitudes toward public education. Many parents also voiced concerns about school funding, which topped the list of problems facing public schools.

Read more about the PDK/Gallup Poll and get more great tips on parent-teacher conferences at www.partnersforpubliced.org.

Let's expect more this year

Pennsylvania public schools are among the best in the nation, but a school funding crisis driven by nearly \$1 billion in cuts to public school classrooms is taking a heavy toll.

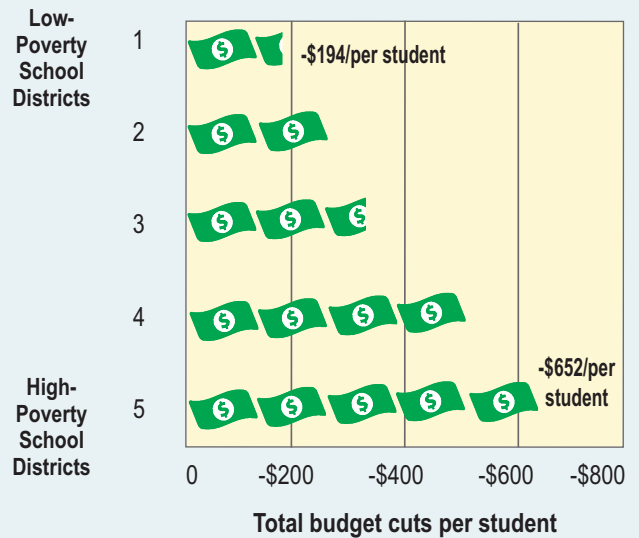
A new research report from the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) finds that school funding cuts have hurt Pennsylvania's poorest school districts and its neediest students the most, with larger class sizes and a drop in student achievement on standardized test scores.

The first step toward ensuring that every Pennsylvania child gets a great education is to insist that our elected leaders make school funding a top priority. Your voice is so very important in this effort. By being an advocate for public education, you can set the bar higher for this school year and hold your elected leaders accountable for the choices they have made.

Let's expect more this year. We can work together to make public education a top priority and ensure the success of every student.

For more on the PSEA report, go to www.partnersforpubliced.org.

The highest-poverty school districts averaged funding cuts more than 3 times the size of cuts to the state's wealthiest districts.



School fundraisers are getting healthier

One way many parents get involved in their children's schools is by participating in school fundraisers.

Did you know that school fundraisers are also a way to promote healthy options for children in a fast food world?

Beginning this school year, all food sold to students during the school day must meet certain nutrition standards set forth in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, and those standards apply to fundraisers for sports teams,

marching band, and other in-school fundraisers.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture: "The new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will help schools to make the healthy choice the easy choice by offering students more of the foods and beverages we should be encouraging – whole grains, fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, lower-fat dairy – while limiting foods with too much sugar, fat and salt."

The law does allow states to set a

limited number of exemptions to the rule, and Pennsylvania elementary and middle schools are permitted up to five exempt fundraisers while high schools are allowed up to 10 – each lasting no more than a week.

The rules do not apply to non-food fundraisers during the school day or food fundraisers that occur at events held after school, off campus, or on weekends. For more information, go to www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/allfoods_fundraisers.pdf.

Partner Benefits: Save on college visits

For college-bound high schoolers, the autumn months often include SATs, college applications, and college visits.

Partners for Public Education can save you money on college visits and travel nationwide using the Access program. With your membership, you can visit the Access website, enter the zip code of your destination, and find discounts and savings on hotels, restaurants, car rentals, and other businesses near college and university campuses across the country.

[Visit the Partner Benefits page to get started.](#)



About Partners for Public Education

PPE's mission is to provide parents, community leaders, elected officials, and educators with information and resources they need about public education in Pennsylvania, so we can work together to ensure the success of every child.

October 2014



Learn more and enroll for free at www.partnersforpubliced.org