



**GREATER PHILADELPHIA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



philadelphia
school partnership



December 4, 2015

Dear Governor Wolf and the Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

As we head into what is hopefully the final stretch of a long budget season, we are writing to reiterate our support for a budget that pairs an increased investment in public education with meaningful accountability to ensure those dollars are well spent.

In order to build a highly skilled workforce that will fuel the Commonwealth's economic growth, Pennsylvania must invest in building and maintaining a public education system that is accountable, meets the needs of all students and makes efficient use of resources.

Our current understanding of the "budget framework" is that it provides additional resources, but there is no final agreement on including important accountability provisions. We know that more money alone does not lead to increased student achievement, especially in schools with the greatest need.

Two bills, currently under consideration, provide the kind of accountability we believe are in the best interest of students and the education system in general:

- HB 805 relieves schools of burdensome mandates, like "last-in, first out" layoffs, that restrict school districts from retaining their best teachers. Pennsylvania is one of only six remaining states where layoffs are required, by law, to be based solely on a teacher's seniority.
- SB 6 would establish a system for addressing and providing necessary intervention for chronically low-performing schools. This proposal is based on successful models in states as diverse as Massachusetts, Tennessee and Louisiana.

As business leaders, advocates and educators, we strongly support pairing an increase in spending with bills like SB 6 and HB 805 because taxpayers are demanding a better return on their investment and families trapped in low performing schools are desperate for better options.

Sincerely,

A+ Schools | Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce | PennCAN
Pennsylvania Business Counsel | Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry |
Philadelphia School Partnership | Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce