

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2017

[View Online](#)

Pre-K Students Thank Governor Wolf for \$75 Million Increase for Early Childhood Education in 2017-2018 Budget

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Governor Wolf was joined by members of the Pre-K for PA Campaign to discuss his early childhood education investments and was presented with Valentine's Day cards from pre-kindergarten students as a sign gratitude for his dedication to education. Over the past two years, Governor Wolf has made a new way for Pennsylvania. Instead of allowing schools to become the first casualty of our budget deficit, Governor Wolf has made them our first priority. In just three years, Governor Wolf will have increased funding by nearly two-thirds of those short-sighted cuts to our public school system.

“These children, and thousands of young people like them across the state, are counting on us in Harrisburg to have their backs – and to ensure that high-quality pre-kindergarten programs are available to them, in their communities,” said Governor Tom Wolf. “Last week, I proposed a budget that invests an additional \$75 million in high-quality early childhood education programs which will allow for more than 8,400 additional children to enroll in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program. When children are given this right – and have the support they need – all our lives are enriched.”

The Principal Partners of the Pre-K for PA organization lauded Governor Wolf for his commitment to expanding access to high quality pre-k to more Pennsylvania three- and four-year-olds: “The Pre-K for PA Campaign is grateful that Governor Wolf is standing up for kids in his 2017-18 budget proposal. Serving more kids with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will reap strong cost savings in the future in the form of less public spending on

special education, social welfare programs, and crime. " Studies show that children who participate in high-quality pre-kindergarten perform better in school, graduate at higher rates and earn more throughout their working lives compared to peers that do not have access to early learning programs. Additionally, children who were previously enrolled in Pre-K Counts outperform their economically disadvantaged peers in third-grade math and reading.

Fair and increased education funding for all Pennsylvania schools continues to be one of Governor Wolf's top priorities to ensure students are college and career ready.

The future of Pennsylvania depends on making investments in what matters most. In this year's budget, Governor Wolf is proposing an additional \$209 million increase in education funding. Our commonwealth is facing a serious budget deficit, but by reducing government bureaucracy and finding cost-savings, we can continue to invest in our children's futures so we can make Pennsylvania stronger.

The 2017-18 budget investments in education include:

- **\$100 million increase in Basic Education Funding.**
Following \$415 million in basic education and Ready to Learn Block Grant funding increases over the past two fiscal years, this increase will be distributed through the Basic Education Funding Formula, providing an equitable and predictable allocation to school districts across the commonwealth.
- **\$25 million increase in Special Education Funding.**
This increase, allocated to school districts through the formula adopted by the bipartisan legislative Special Education Funding Commission, builds upon a \$50 million increase over the last two years.

- **\$75 million increase in high-quality early childhood education.** Children who participate in high-quality pre-k programs perform better in school, graduate at higher rates and earn more throughout their lives compared to peers without access to early learning programs. Building upon \$60 million in additional investment over the past two years, this nearly 40 percent increase in funding will allow more than 8,400 additional children to enroll in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program.
- **\$8.9 million increase for the 14 universities of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.** The governor will continue to work with PASSHE to develop individual college plans that address performance, affordability, and accountability, while partnering with employers to create structured career pathways.

MEDIA CONTACTS: J.J. Abbott, 717.783.1116

###