



TO: School district superintendents, local education association and school board presidents, building principals, business managers and intermediate unit executive directors

FROM: Statewide Association Leaders

DATE: May 24, 2017

RE: SB/HB 76 and School Property Tax Elimination

As you may have seen and heard in the press lately, there has been an unprecedented push by advocates and certain policymakers to pass SB 76, a bill that seeks to “eliminate” school property taxes through an increased personal income tax (3.07 percent to 4.95 percent), an increased sales tax (6 percent to 7 percent) and an expanded sales tax base (textbooks, some food and beverages, professional services, candy, gum, etc.). This proposal would lock in current funding levels, and would drain more from public schools in upcoming years by capping education funding at a rate that does not reflect actual costs. This would lead to more crowded schools, less individual attention, and fewer opportunities for kids. What’s more, this legislation is a bad deal for ordinary families, who would shoulder a \$14 billion tax shift.

School districts that have undertaken debt service as of a certain date (which is yet to be determined) would maintain the property tax to make debt service payments until that debt is retired. So while the bill has been sold as school property tax “elimination” to many of your residents, particularly vulnerable senior citizens, it is anything but elimination, and it has the potential to deprive your students of the educational programs they need. Some advocates and legislators believe they have the votes pass the bill this session. The statewide associations who represent you and your school districts recognized this challenge last year and have been working together on a daily basis to execute a strategy to educate legislators and our collective memberships on the reality of SB/HB 76.

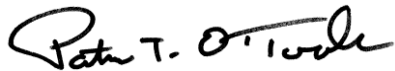
Now we need your help. It’s not enough for us to understand the impact of SB/HB 76, what the bill means for our public schools, students, and residents of your school districts. We need to work together to expand each community’s awareness of the legislation’s impact, particularly parents. **As leaders of your statewide professional associations, we ask that all of you – superintendents, school board presidents, local education associations presidents, business managers, building principals and IU directors – coordinate with each other to develop and execute an outreach plan that will educate parents on the impact of HB/SB 76 on your school district.**

We know there are many different ways to reach parents and educate your local communities on the problems with HB/SB 76. Working together, all of you are the right people to figure out how to make that happen. We are happy to provide you with the information, fact sheets, data and more to help you make your case. We’re working on a website that will contain much of the

information you'll need. Our hope is that all of you will coordinate to develop a plan before the end of the school year. We suggest rolling out a parent/community awareness plan in August as the new school year begins and parents are more engaged.

If we fail to educate people beyond the education system on the pitfalls of SB/HB 76, we will never defeat it. We must work together at all levels to ensure that irresponsible and bad public policy isn't advanced for political reasons. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing your plans in action.

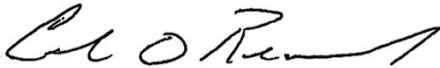
Sincerely,



Dr. Patrick O'Toole
PASA President
Upper St. Clair Township School District



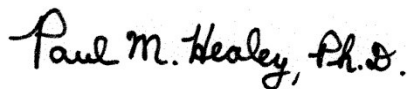
W. Gerard Oleksiak
PSEA President
Upper Merion Area School District



Curtis O. Richards
PASBO President
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Dr. Paul Healey
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Mr. Thomas Gluck
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