



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2022

Gov. Wolf: Build on Historic School Investments with Life-changing Improvements for Students

Erie, PA – Governor Tom Wolf visited teachers and education stakeholders in Erie today to outline his plan to build on his administration’s record investments in students over the past seven years with a \$1.9 billion increase in education from pre-k through college.

“When I took office, I vowed to be a force for change for our students, our schools, and our future, and I am proud to say that over the past seven years, we have turned the tide,” said Gov. Wolf. “We have reversed devastating funding cuts and invested in classrooms. These are historic increases and life-changing improvements, but our work is not finished.”

Pennsylvania is primed for a major education funding increase because of Gov. Wolf’s work to right the state’s shaky finances. From day one, the governor prioritized fiscal responsibility, reversing a \$2-\$3 billion state budget deficit into a record surplus, while at the same time investing in schools. The commonwealth can now afford a major new investment in schools, students and communities without raising taxes or reducing support for a single district.

Generational Investment in Students

The governor’s budget announced yesterday calls for building on the momentum of previous years with a generational investment of \$1.9 billion in education from pre-k through college, including:

- \$1.25 billion in basic education funding, bringing the total going through the Fair Funding Formula to more than \$2 billion, or 26.5 percent of state funding.
- \$300 million for the groundbreaking Level Up initiative launched last year to support the 100 most underfunded schools.
- \$200 million increase for Special Education.

“I want Pennsylvania’s classrooms to be the best in the world,” said Gov. Wolf. “I know that if we work together, we can get it done. I need your help to show our state legislators why this investment is vital for our schools. Our students deserve it, and our commonwealth’s future depends on it.”

The governor visited with students and teachers at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School in Erie and held a press conference to call for an education funding increase that creates a brighter future for young people.

“This is a budget that parents and public education advocates are excited about from Erie to Luzerne to Delaware to Washington to Centre Counties and everywhere in between. We are ready to get to work,” said Susan Spicka, executive director, Education Voters of PA. “State lawmakers need to get on board with this budget and approve it without any cuts. Harrisburg is flush with cash. There is no reason for the General Assembly not to approve these critical investments in our children and in the future of the Commonwealth. And again, thank you Governor Wolf, for your commitment to Pennsylvania’s students.”

Under the governor’s budget proposal, the Erie School District would receive an additional \$28.2 million in basic education funding, including a \$8.38 million boost from Level Up, representing a 32 percent increase in state support in a single year.

“The transformative power of purposeful, continued investment in education is evident in Erie’s Public Schools every day,” said Superintendent Brian Polito. “It’s because of that investment that we are able to continue our work to make all of our schools warm, safe and dry learning spaces where tomorrow’s leaders can grow and learn. It’s because of that investment that our students are now learning from an updated curriculum that gives them the tools they need to succeed. It’s because of that investment that we’re able to provide vital services and support. The impact is real and lasting, not just for our students and families but for the community at large. That is why it is so crucial that our investment in education continues, and why we wholeheartedly support Gov. Wolf’s proposal.”

“I am honored to have Governor Wolf in Erie and in my district to kick off his budget tour of the commonwealth,” said Rep. Pat Harkins. “Governor Wolf’s commitment to funding education at historic levels does not go unnoticed, his continuing support of the Erie school district is greatly appreciated and welcomed. Over the past eight years I have been honored to work closely with Gov. Wolf and wish to thank him for all that he has done for our region.”

Promises Kept

Gov. Wolf has kept his promise over the past seven years to make K-12 education a priority, including:

- Investing more than \$1.8 billion in education from pre-k through college, including the largest single-year education funding increase in state history in 2021.
- Creating the Level Up initiative to provide \$100 million to the 100 most underfunded school districts.
- Establishing the Public School Fair Funding Formula to help address chronic inequitable and inadequate funding for school districts in the commonwealth.
- Investing \$116 million in science, computer science and technical education, including \$80 million in the innovative PAsmart program, and \$36 million in apprenticeships and workforce training.
- Modernizing standards for science education.
- Investing more than \$130 million in School Safety Grants to make schools and school communities safer.
- Reducing the age when students must start school to 6 and raising the high school dropout age to 18 to set students up for a lifetime of success.
- Launching first-of-its-kind “It’s On Us PA” Campus Sexual Assault Prevention initiative to combat sexual assault and make colleges and universities safer.

“We’ve come so far over the past seven years, and now we have an opportunity to capitalize on the work we’ve done so far with a historic, life-changing investment in schools,” said Gov. Wolf. “We cannot let this opportunity to invest in our students and our future – without raising taxes a single penny – go to waste. Now is the time to take action.”

The governor is also proposing to further help students and taxpayers with a common-sense plan to improve charter school accountability and will preserve school choice, saving school districts \$373 million a year.

Note: Photo and video from today’s event available at PACast.com.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Elizabeth Rementer, ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov, 717-783-1116