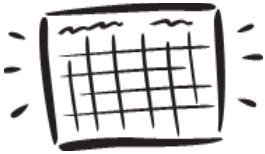




# Childwatch

Speaking out for the region's children.

A Publication of Public Citizens for Children and Youth • April 2011



## PCCY's 30th Anniversary Party

Join Us And Help Celebrate Children!

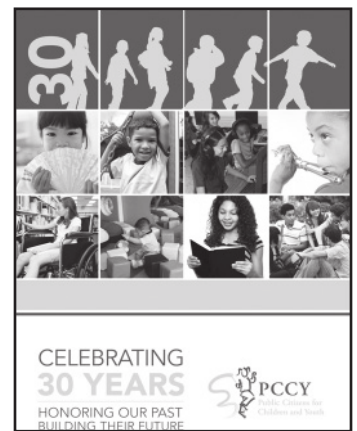
Three decades of making the world better for children in this region and state is an occasion to celebrate and **we invite you to join us at our 30th Anniversary Party on Wednesday, April 27, in The Crystal Tea Room at The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East.**

The three-hour event begins with a 5:30pm cocktail hour, followed by a buffet dinner featuring beef and ham carving stations, as well as a pasta station.

*Join us* for performances by an ensemble from the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, the Philadelphia All City Choir Ensemble, Tune Up Philly String Ensemble, poet Jacob Winterstein and Point Breeze Dance Company. There's also the ever popular silent auction.

"We've accomplished so much over the past 30 years," says Shelly Yanoff, Executive Director, "but we still have more to do. With your help, we can continue to watch out for and speak up for the region's children."

**Tickets for the 30th anniversary Super Party are available at our website: [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > Donate > Donate Now.**



For more information, call **Steven Fynes at 215-563-5848.**

---

---

## The Kids Will Not Be Alright Unless You Act Now!

*If* we, their protectors, think assuring them a quality education is too expensive...*If* we, their family members, care only about taking care of our own kids...*If* we, the general public, don't mind if some kids are on waiting lists for quality child care that never gets shorter...*If* we think it is alright to lose afterschool programs and library hours and recreation centers...*If* we think that kids don't need quality dental or eye care or healthcare...*If* we think that afterschool programs are unnecessary.

*If* we think that the arts and libraries are luxuries we can't afford in our schools...*If* we think that it's not our problem if more homeless and helpless people are on the street...*If* we think that it's ok to stop supporting community college or other colleges and higher education...*If* we don't flinch

at the idea of cutting one billion dollars from public education...*If* we think that it's better to build more prisons than to build strong communities...*If* we think that kids dropping out of school is somebody else's problem...*If* we think the answer to the high cost of health care is to deny it to children and families.

***Who are these people who think like that?***

*If* we don't tell our elected and appointed policy makers that we are not those people – they will think it's alright – but it's NOT! Tell them today that taxes are the price we pay to live in a civilized society and everyone – every industry and every one of us – should pay our fair share. ***The kids are NOT alright if we don't.***

*Shelly Yanoff*

# Federal Budget Update

## Washington Is Not Finished Cutting Programs



As spring arrives, the budget battles continue in the nation's capital, including those for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

The federal government had been operating under a continuing resolution (CR) that extended funding through March 4, but Congress has not come to an agreement on funding through the end of FY 2011 (September 30). As a result, short-term CRs have been passed to avoid a government shut down, allowing time for negotiations on a bill to finalize FY 2011 spending.

The reality is that as negotiations continue, these stop gap measures have continually chipped away at the discretionary spending that funds many critical investments such as education, child care, and Pell grants. The March 4 CR cut \$19 billion below 2010 discretionary spending levels. The three-week CR extending funding through March 18 removes an additional \$4 billion, while the third CR extending funding through early April carves out another \$6 billion.

*And the cutting is not over.*

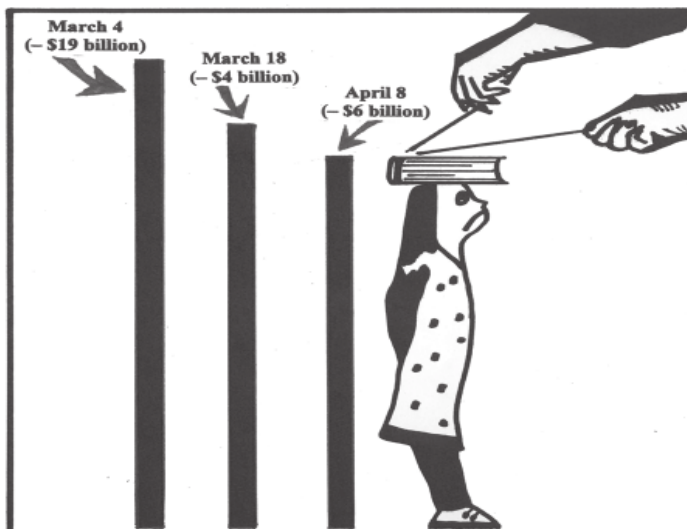
The House and Senate remain far apart on a compromise. The Senate rejected the House-passed long-term continuing resolution (H.R. 1) proposing \$66 billion in discretionary spending cuts below current levels (\$85 billion below 2010 levels – so far). The majority believed those cuts were too steep. Yet, the Democratic alternative, which by comparison cut \$6.5 billion below current levels, also failed when a majority thought it removed too little.

Meanwhile, negotiations on the FY 2012 budget have also begun. The budget proposals put forth by Republican leadership in Congress have deficit reduction as their top economic priority, which is not consistent with the sweeping and costly tax compromise reached in December.

While deficit reduction is clearly among the issues Congress must address, discretionary spending – which makes up less than one-fifth of all federal spending – should not be the primary target, and has not contributed significantly to the deficit.

At a time when 14 million Americans are unemployed, job-creation and public investments to support the building of our workforce and continued economic recovery should remain at the forefront of Congressional priorities. Don't let Congress promote hypocritical policies in the name of deficit reduction! If we can afford tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations, we can afford education, child care, and other core supports for our children and families.

## Federal Cuts Diminish Our Kids



### *Did You Know...*

More children have been able to have their healthcare thanks to Medicaid and CHIP?

More young children are participating in quality early care and education?

More children are able to achieve permanency – re-unifying with their families or being adopted?

More children and youth are achieving academically in school?

*Let's keep it up! It makes no sense to turn back now.*

# The State Budget

## Basic Education And Higher Education

The deepest cuts in the proposed state budget are reserved for Basic Education (pre-k-12) and higher education. The Basic Education Subsidy, which the previous administration had increased as part of a larger effort to narrow the student achievement gap, was reduced by almost half a billion

dollars, more than 10 percent. Coupled with the elimination of the Accountability Block Grant and other cuts, public education will lose \$1 billion if this budget is enacted. Struggling students, lower class sizes, technology in the classroom – are all at risk of being cut significantly.

### **TELL THE GOVERNOR AND PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE: PROTECT PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS - STOP THE BILLION DOLLAR CUT!**

Make your voice heard. Governor Corbett has proposed state budget cuts totaling over one billion dollars in funding for public education. These cuts will have real and devastating impacts on the 1.7 million students in Pennsylvania's public schools. The research-based educational programs proven to help students achieve – pre-k, full-day kindergarten, tutoring for struggling students, lower class sizes, technology in the classroom – are all at risk of being cut significantly.

Pennsylvania students have made real progress and demonstrated increased test scores in recent years. In fact, Pennsylvania is now a national leader in academic achievement due

to investments in these key programs. \$1 billion in cuts to public education will turn back the clock on this progress.

We are in tough economic times and difficult choices do need to be made, but students only have one chance to get a quality education. If the state reduces its funding for public education by \$1 billion, these severe cuts will force school boards to choose between raising property taxes or cutting effective educational programs or both.

***Tell the Governor and your State Legislators:  
STOP THE BILLION DOLLAR CUT!***

---

### **PETITION**

#### **PROTECT PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS - STOP THE BILLION DOLLAR CUT!**

Many of our school districts are already in a funding crisis. They are cutting programs that work, furloughing teachers and other staff, increasing class size, and raising property taxes – just to balance their budgets. As proposed by the Governor, one billion dollars in funding cuts to our public schools will make this bad situation worse. Kids will lose full day kindergarten, smaller class size and help they need to learn. Our children only have one chance to get a quality education. Their futures — and ours as a state — rely on that.

I urge you to do everything in your power to restore the one billion dollars in cuts to public education as you work to complete the state budget in the coming weeks.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Mail petition back to: PCCY, 1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, 6th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
or by fax to 215-563-9442.**

# State Budget and Kids

## Highlights of PA's Proposed Early Care and Education Budget

Facing a projected shortfall of more than \$4 billion next year, Governor Corbett presented his first budget to the General Assembly on March 8th. It calls for a three-percent cut to General Fund spending, with sizable cuts to education and public welfare programs. Although Pennsylvania's early care and education (ECE) programs are funded by these departments, the budget calls for relatively modest cuts to Child Care Works, Keystone STARS, Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance. However, it proposes to eliminate the Accountability Block Grant, a major source of funding for pre-k and full day kindergarten. The proposed budget targets education funding.

### Child Care Works and Keystone STARS

Child Care Works and Keystone STARS are funded jointly by the state and federal government. Proposed state funding for low-income working families remains the same in 2011-12 as in FY 2010-11. However, the additional American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, "economic stimulus") funds Pennsylvania has received for child care will expire at the end of September. The state expects a small increase in federal child care funds, but this will not be enough to make up for the loss of ARRA funds.

Thus, even though the state proposes to level-fund child care, Pennsylvania will lose \$15.6 million in funds for low-income working families next year. This will be particularly difficult for these families as a growing waiting list already causes most to wait 6 to 12 months before receiving subsidy.

Proposed state funding for TANF/former TANF families is \$6.7 million less next year than for FY 2010-11. Nevertheless, the state anticipates serving 2,087 additional children from TANF/former TANF families next year.

DPW Secretary Gary Alexander has noted that his department will explore the possibility of increasing parent co-pays for Child Care Works. He praised Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS quality improvement system.

### Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance

The Governor's budget proposal continues funding Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance at current levels. Both programs experienced modest reductions in August 2010, when the previous administration froze spending to cope with a budget shortfall.

### Accountability Block Grant

The most serious threat to early care and education in the Governor's budget proposal is the elimination of the Accountability Block Grant (ABG), a crucial source of support for pre-k, full day kindergarten and reduced class size from kindergarten to third grade. During the current fiscal year the ABG provides school districts with \$259 million, which they can spend in several areas the state has identified as likely to increase student achievement.

### What You Can Do

Given the extent of cuts to other programs, there will be intense pressure on legislators to shift proposed early childhood funding into other programs. Your advocacy will help prevent this.

***Call, write, visit your state legislators and sign the petition (on page 3). Make sure they understand:***

- the value of early care and education programs in their districts.
- early learning is the foundation of an educational continuum that extends through childhood and young adulthood.
- investments in K-12 education sustain Pennsylvania's investments in early childhood education. Without full-day kindergarten and quality basic education, children lose the gains made in early childhood.
- raising additional revenue by asking energy companies, tobacco companies and other large corporations is essential if we are to support children throughout the educational continuum.

The federal government provides approximately half of Pennsylvania's early care and education budget. As of this writing, the fate of child care and Head Start / Early Head Start funding also hangs in balance. Pennsylvania's early childhood budget for FY 2011 and 2012 depends on the outcome of Congressional budget negotiations.

***Call and write to your US Representatives and Senators to let them know:***

- that children and families in our communities benefit from the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant and Head Start Supplemental Assistance.



In his 2012 budget, President Obama proposed to establish grants to support state systems for early learning. (This was previously known as the Early Learning Challenge Grant Fund.) Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey introduced legislation in March to encourage states to create child care quality improvement systems such as Keystone STARS, and to encourage states that already to have these to build upon

them. Senator Casey and others are also urging Congress to include funds for early childhood education in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act when it is reauthorized hopefully later this year.

To follow these initiatives, sign up to receive e-alerts from PCCY at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org).

---

---

## It's Just Common Sense

### Four Revenue Proposals Now Being Considered At The State Level

*Budgets Are Not Like the Weather.*

*They are not acts of God.*

*They are created by human beings.*

*They are the products of choices.*

*We can't cut out way out of this!*

Tell your state legislators to make better choices for kids and:

- Consider a tax on smokeless tobacco and cigars;
- Charge fees to extract natural gas from Marcellus Shale;
- Close corporate tax loopholes, and;
- Eliminate the vendor sales tax discount.

---

---

## Poverty In America

### The Real Obstacle To American Competitiveness

For many years we have been bombarded with dire statistics about our country's poor performance on international education tests and embarrassed that students in countries we used to think of as "third world" are outperforming American students. In his inaugural address, Governor Corbett noted that "Our education system must contend with other nations and so we must embrace innovation, competition and choice in our education system."

But if we look more closely at the data we discover that when we control for poverty, American students rank 1st, 2nd or 3rd on all the major international tests of academic performance. The poverty rate of Scandinavian students is three percent; in Philadelphia public schools it is 75 percent.

*The root of the problem may well be poverty.*

*What are the lessons we should learn from abroad?*

*Lesson #1:* Government should produce the greatest good for the greatest number and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. Today one percent of Americans control more than 90 percent of the wealth.

*Lesson #2:* Taxes exist to support the community as a whole and safeguard its interests. They must ensure a tight social safety net including universal access to health care, affordable housing, living wage jobs, good schools, quality child care, and secure pensions for all, not just some.

*Lesson #3:* Investments in young children pay off in terms of later social, educational, career and physical well-being.

*Lesson #4:* Government should be the backup to assure that kids are supported by parents who can focus on their development.

In the Scandinavian countries, one would be hard-pressed to find children:

- who are essentially raising themselves because their parents are unable to;
- who come to school hungry and ill-clothed;
- who cannot pay attention to the teacher because of sleep deprivation;
- who have no place at home to do their homework;

- who do not know anyone in their family or neighborhood who is stably employed;
- who are traumatized by the violence they have witnessed;
- whose medical problems go untreated or require hours of waiting in emergency rooms;
- who have no role models for educational and career success;
- who have little hope for a better life.

Yet almost every teacher in the Philadelphia school system can name scores of children who confront these circumstances every single day. There is a large “third world” right here in Philadelphia – in the 1st Congressional District, which has the fourth highest hunger rate in America.

We in Philadelphia and in communities across the nation – urban, suburban and rural – need not only better schools but, even more importantly, a 21st century war on poverty.



## Give Kids a Smile Day

### Take Two - Thursday, April 21st

“Give Kids a Smile” Day, PCCY’s **seventh annual day of free dental care** for Philadelphia children, has been rescheduled (due to snow) for **Thursday, April 21st**.

Originally planned for February, schools in the School District of Philadelphia were forced to make up a number of snow days. However, all of the nearly two dozen participating dentists have agreed to accommodate the new date. “We thank the dentists for their continued participation,” says Roxy Woloszyn, PCCY’s Behavioral Health Coordinator. “Their flexibility demonstrates their dedication to the program and the children.” Parents who call PCCY will be connected to the participating dentists convenient to their homes, and sent a reminder postcard with their child’s

appointment information. If you would like to make an appointment for your child, call us at 215-563-5848 x35.

If you would like to volunteer to answer phones and welcome children in dentists’ waiting rooms or are a dentist willing to volunteer your services for “Give Kids a Smile” Day call **Roxy at 215-563-5848 x35 or [roxyw@pccy.org](mailto:roxyw@pccy.org)**.



## CHIP Enrollment Drops

### But Medicaid Rolls Increase

Enrollment in CHIP, the state’s public health insurance program for children, has declined over the past year. Between January 2010 and January 2011 the number of children covered by CHIP has dropped by 4,000, from 197,276 to 193,262. At the same time the number of Pennsylvania children enrolled in Medicaid jumped 55,513 to 1,130,833 from December 2009 to December 2010. “The figures demonstrate that the need for children’s health insurance coverage in families that have very little income is high,” says Colleen McCauley, PCCY’s Health Director.

With the federal poverty guideline for 2011 rising to \$22,352 from \$22,050 (the Medicaid maximum income for a family of four) and the prospect of impending state and

federal budget cuts, McCauley anticipates that the number of children in the public health insurance programs will grow. “Families are still being hit hard,” she says, “but Pennsylvania is in a great place with virtually every child qualifying for health insurance. We continue to provide health insurance for uninsured kids.”

An estimated 26,000 Philadelphia kids are uninsured. Approximately 138,558 Pennsylvania children are eligible for CHIP or Medicaid but are not enrolled. PCCY assists families with enrolling their children in the public health insurance plans. Call PCCY at **215-563-5848 x17** if your child needs health insurance coverage.

# Changes Coming To CHIP Dental Will Be Detrimental To The Health of PA's Children

If approved by the federal government, proposed modifications to the state's CHIP dental benefits will be detrimental to the health of Pennsylvania's children.

Implemented statewide since January, the changes call for ending payment for some routine dental services: tooth-colored fillings in primary teeth, nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and conscious sedation, and a no-exceptions \$1,500 annual cap on dental care services. The amendment, filed with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), also calls for limiting payment for certain x-rays (bitewings) to once a year, prior authorization for root canals and related therapies, and a \$5,200 lifetime maximum for orthodontic coverage for CHIP recipients.

Dentists are reporting that parents have cancelled appointments because they cannot afford to pay the out-of-pocket costs for their children's care due to the changes, according to Colleen McCauley, PCCY's Health Director.

"These restrictions seriously hamper a dentist's ability to provide appropriate care for children," she says, noting that some of the changes are in direct conflict with guidelines set forth by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. "Without these services children's care is likely to be postponed until the problems have escalated, causing unnecessary pain, suffering, and more severe dental problems requiring more expensive treatment that ironically, CHIP will pay for."

PCCY has formed an ad-hoc, statewide coalition of organizations and dentists to advocate for children's continued access to routine dental care under CHIP. Besides informing legislators on key committees about the changes in advance of state budget hearings, PCCY wrote to CMS expressing our serious concerns about the consequences of the changes to CHIP dental benefits, asking the agency to postpone approval of the plan until it could be thoroughly reviewed.



## Where We Stand On Vouchers Let's Make Sure Students Succeed In School

*(Editors note: Excerpt from testimony at the public hearing on vouchers (Seante Bill 1) before the Pennsylvania House Democratic Policy Caucus, on February 22, 2011.)*

As we navigate one of the worst economic times in many decades, we need to make doubly sure that we are not taking funds away from the basic school system that is charged with the public responsibility of educating all our children.

I'm talking of the system of schools that can not say no to kids who knock at its door, the schools system that must take kids with disabilities, kids who need extra social services, kids who have a tough time learning. The magic and promise of public education is that it can be responsible to teach the newest immigrant who is just learning English, the descendants of those who came over on the Mayflower, and those whose ancestors were not allowed to learn to read.

That is the promise of this country and the promise of our schools and while we cannot say we have kept it nearly

as well as we should have – we cannot give up on it. We must keep working on it – not starve it – we must not take resources from it.

We must not pretend that the free market will provide our children with the protections they need. We have no evidence that the free market has been a protector of those who need protection – of those who are low income, of those who need government.

Taxes are the price we pay to live in a civilized society and our taxes must support the schools for most of our children – the system of schools that must have an open door to all students. And, thus far, the voucher experiments in other places have not resulted in improved student achievement. S.B.1 is not accountable, will not help most children and will damage public education in the Commonwealth. PCCY has joined Pennsylvanians Opposed to Vouchers.

A full copy of Shelly Yanoff's testimony can be found at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > News > Testimony.

# Locked Out Of The SRC Meeting

## When Is Public Forum Not Public?

American history is a required course at every level of schooling in our nation. Kindergarteners learn to recite the Pledge of Allegiance with confidence. Middle schoolers memorize the Declaration of Independence. High schoolers analyze the Bill of Rights. Each step of the way, American students are cultivated to grow into informed public citizens, for we know this is the cornerstone of a democracy.

***So when public citizens cannot gain entry into public meetings, we know there is a problem.***

On Wednesday, March 16th, the weekly School Reform Commission meeting was more significant than usual. Students, teachers, community members and parents anxiously waited to examine a slew of important and controversial issues, from the firing of Audenried teacher Hope Moffett to the charter provider assignment of newly-designated Renaissance schools.

The meeting was closed to members of the public within fifteen minutes of its opening. Lines of school police blocked the door and the waiting area outside the auditorium. In the downstairs atrium, in atypical fashion, a video projection screen and rows of chairs had been set up in advance for the “public” to view the proceedings.

According to school police officers the meeting was “at capacity and closed by the fire marshal.” But the projection screen revealed the opposite, showing rows of empty seats. As the hour wore on, dozens of public citizens left the auditorium as agenda items were addressed – typical at an SRC meeting. Still, no one “who wasn’t on the list” could gain admission. Inside, citizens began to text photos of empty seats to those outside. As the crowd outside grew larger, more questions were posed to the officers. Insult was

added to injury when those “on the list” trotted by while others waited.

The overburdened officer blocking Portal D was trying his hardest, dutifully obeying orders from his higher ups.

As the questioning went on he began to trip over his answers; first it was the fire marshal, then it was his boss, another time it was because his boss was upset.

As a result of the conflicting answers tempers began to flare. A small group began to make signs, duct taping their mouths shut while others wrote down the names of the officers. Some questioned the validity of proceedings of a public meeting that was in fact, not public. A reporter began taking pictures and quotes from the waiting crowd. Ironically, that’s when the situation began to change.

The officer blocking Portal D notified the crowd that a number of seats had been vacated and “some folks” would be able to go in. So, two hours and fifteen minutes after it began, 40 public citizens were finally permitted to enter a “public” meeting.

If space/crowding were truly the issue, say it and be prepared to answer valid questions. The job of citizens is to hold our leaders accountable. If a meeting is confidential – and not meant to be public – be clear about that as well. But keep in mind, we citizens know that two hours and fifteen minutes is too long to wait outside of a meeting where decisions about our communities are being made.

Two hours and 15 minutes is too long to wait for democracy to prevail.



## Save The Dates

**Wednesday, May 11th: SRC Meeting** at 440 North Broad Street, 2pm on the 2nd floor.

**Monday, May 16th: PCCY Movie Night** - Documentary: “Pressure Cooker,” covering two semesters of cooking boot camp at Kensington High School.

**Wednesday, May 18th: SRC Meeting** at 440 North Broad Street, 2pm on the 2nd floor.

**Wednesday, June 8th: SRC Meeting** at 440 North Broad Street, 2pm on the 2nd floor.

A full copy of the SRC Meeting schedule is available at: <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/src/schedule>.



# Kindergarten

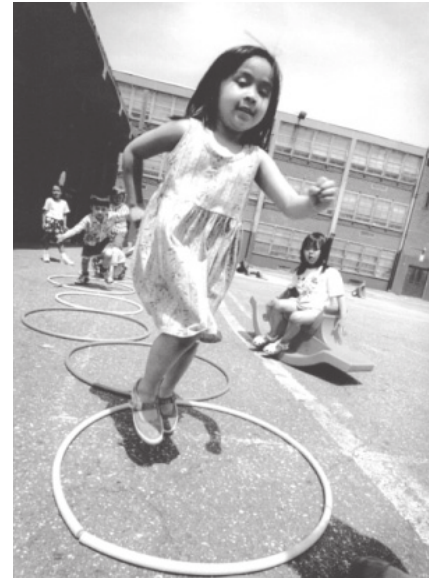
## Early Learning Equals Early Success

By every metric, kindergarten and pre-kindergarten make the grade. Students who attend kindergarten are less likely to repeat grades and require specialized services, and are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. From a social standpoint kindergarten helps students learn the ropes that will guide them to academic success. For many children, kindergarten is the first stop on the educational journey to become acclimated with rules, procedures and high expectations.

However, the Governor's new budget threatens to halt the progress that Pennsylvania has made. Corbett's failure to fund the Accountability Block Grant (ABG), which provided \$259 million dollars to school districts last year, is critical to funding kindergarten and pre-kindergarten throughout the state. Without it, districts will face tough decisions on programs that are the core of our gains. If the budget fails to provide these funds, children will face the elimination of pre-k and kindergarten along with other keys to success.

In our area thousands of students benefit from full-day kindergarten. Philadelphia, Bensalem, Bristol, Norristown, Allentown and Coatesville average 23 students per

classroom to ensure a quality kindergarten education. Many of those same students have also benefited from increased instructional time, math and literacy coaching for their teachers, and social and emotional wellness programs. Norristown is already toiling with weighing the possibility of eliminating its kindergarten.



Thousands of children should not be in jeopardy of losing kindergarten. Thousands of children don't deserve to be cheated of their good start. Investing in them now will save our state millions of dollars and the burden of playing catch up later.

---

---

## Arts Focus Group

### Arts Teachers Explore Supports Needed For Effectiveness

Fifteen arts teachers from 13 Philadelphia schools readily accepted a chance to attend a focus group to compare experiences and discuss supports needed to enhance the arts education they provide to their students.

Co-sponsored by PCCY and ArtsRising, the educators were asked to consider two questions: what supports have they received to deliver quality arts experiences to their students, and what kinds of supports do they need to improve their teaching effectiveness?



Among the supports received were formal and informal mentoring among peers; professional develop-

ment opportunities, and visits from a local non-profit promoting access to arts for all children. More structured curriculum, and common planning were uppermost on the list of supports needed, which also included funding for supplies.



The teachers discovered they had much in common, says Christina Jackson, Interim Arts Education and Picasso Project Coordinator. "By the end, we were able to help the process of building an arts teacher network and a sense of community."



# Building Art Partnerships

## Teaching Artists and Schools Working Together

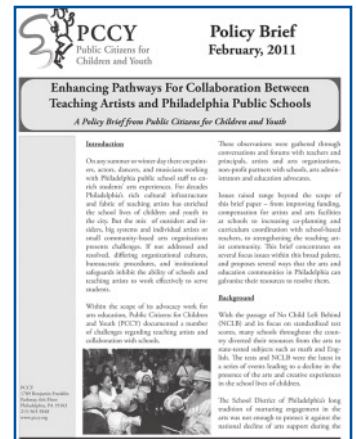
Teaching artists enrich the education of Philadelphia public school students by bringing painting, acting, dancing, and music into the classroom, bridging the gap in arts experiences as arts funding has declined. But the jumble of big systems, community-based organizations and individual artists presents challenges that threaten to inhibit the ability of the arts community to add quality experiences to the children's lives.

PCCY's policy brief, "**Enhancing Pathways for Collaboration Between Teaching Artists and Philadelphia Public Schools**", examines the obstacles hindering smooth partnerships, and proposes solutions to the dilemmas as the public schools continue to employ more teaching artists. The brief explores the current challenges to collaboration including the \$56 cost of annual background checks and \$500 liability insurance; timely payment for services; documentation of work; classroom management; and schools' lack of partnership experience.

"Bringing outside artists into the schools is tremen-

dously beneficial all the way around. School-based arts teachers get re-energized by the contact and students get real a understanding of a specialty area within the arts," says Gretchen Elise Walker, PCCY's Picasso Project Coordinator. "It would be great to have one person at the District to answer all their questions, be their point person and usher them through the process of working with schools, contracting, getting clearances and insurance."

For a copy of "**Enhancing Pathways for Collaboration Between Teaching Artists and Philadelphia Public Schools**" call PCCY at 215-563-5848 x22, or at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > Publications.



# Don't Let The Curtain Close On The Arts

## Progress Made, But Budget Deficits Threatens Advances

These are difficult times. But even in these times we must make sure we don't go backwards. In the last few years, the School District has begun to fill the hole that was left when the arts were allowed to almost disappear from our schools.

Between 2007 and 2010, Philadelphia schools brought in more music, more dance, more visual art classes. In these years, 180 arts teachers joined our schools to move one step closer to providing quality and well rounded education for our children.

*But now the budget deficit threatens these advances.*

Even in difficult times we should act on what we know...that the arts make school more engaging and welcoming for all students and that they serve a critical need. **We know that...**

- the arts have been linked to more learning and achievement for young children who are low income and in need of remedial instruction.

- students involved in the arts develop attention and memory skills that are essential to academic success.
- studies confirm that student involvement in the arts link to higher academic performance, higher standardized test scores, more community service and lower dropout rates.

**Act Now - Don't Let The Curtain Close On The Arts**

Call, write and email – tell the School Reform Commission, School District leaders and your City Council member...

***"Even in these trying times, we must keep the arts in schools. Arts teachers make a difference in our schools. Arts teachers make a difference in the lives of children. Arts teachers help our children to learn about themselves, each other, and their world. Don't close the curtains on the arts in our schools."***

For more information or a copy of this pamphlet and information, contact PCCY at [info@pccy.org](mailto:info@pccy.org) or 215-563-5848.



# Comings and Goings

Congratulations to **Gretchen Elise Walker**, Picasso Project Coordinator! Gretchen, husband Luke and daughter Sophie welcomed Ivan David Walker, born on February 2nd.



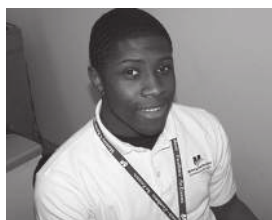
**Taimarie Adams (l)** is PCCY's new Education Policy Associate. Prior to joining PCCY she conducted charter school research at the Philadelphia School Partnership. A psychology and speech communications major at Penn State University, Taimarie is also a graduate of Harvard Law School.

**Christina Jackson (r)**, has joined PCCY as Interim Arts Education Coordinator. She handles Picasso Project duties and serves as an advocacy partner for ArtsRising. Christina is preparing her dissertation for a doctorate degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara.



**Shantee Garner** is PCCY's new Education Policy Associate. She has undergraduate and graduate education degrees from Chestnut Hill College and is completing a Master's in Reading/Writing/Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania.

Child Care Policy Associate, **Shawn Towey**, is working on policy solutions to expand the quality and access to child care for children of low- and moderate-income working parents. Shawn has an MA in Geography and Urban Studies from Temple University, and comes to PCCY with experience in reproductive justice, family violence and helping health care workers improve job quality.



Mastery Charter School (Shoemaker Campus) sophomore **Chris Batts** is at PCCY to learn what it's like to work at a non-profit.



Originally from Hong Kong, Drexel University graduate student, **Stanley Ng**, is studying for his Master's in Public Health in 2012. He studied neuroscience at the University of California, Berkeley, and has done research on drug addiction. Stanley's focus at PCCY will be children's eyes care.

**Ngoc Nguyen** will graduate in June from Drexel University's School of Public Health with a Master's in Public Health (concentration in Community Health and Prevention). Her focus at PCCY has been vision care for children. Ngoc handily coordinated, PCCY's successful "Give Kids Sight" Day at Wills Eye Hospital.



Penn senior, **Haley Phillips**, is studying political science and psychology. She interns in PCCY's arts education department, helping bring more art, music, dance and drama opportunities to kids.

Penn graduate student, **Jenny Tse**, is investigating insurance churning policies and health care reform, with a focus on strategies for helping uninsured children secure the best health care. In May, she will receive her Master's in Education with a concentration in Intercultural Communication.



Temple undergrad and public health major, **Lauren Wood**, assists with health issues: insurance enrollment, vision, dental care, and teen pregnancy and parenting. She will graduate in August.





Phone: 215-563-5848  
Fax: 215-563-9442  
Web: [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)

1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway  
Sixth Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 7287

Return Service Requested

## PCCY Roundtable



Join PCCY's *Education Roundtable*, a monthly discussion with local reporters of topical issues affecting the School District of Philadelphia and its students. Hosted by Shelly Yanoff, the half-hour program airs on PSTV, Comcast Channel 52, the District's own cable channel.

Check local listings for time. **View current episodes at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) >Events > Education Roundtable.**

## Mission Statement

PCCY - Public Citizens for Children and Youth is the region's leading child advocacy organization, dedicated to improving the lives and life chances of children in our region through thoughtful and informed advocacy. Founded in 1980, PCCY is an independent, non-profit organization.

## About The Newsletter

Writers and Editors: Christie Balka, Kathy Fisher, Steven Fynes, Colleen McCauley, Sheila Simmons, Shelly D. Yanoff, Executive Director and Sid Holmes, Communications Director. Design & Layout, Steven E. Fynes.

## Contact Us

Telephone: **215-563-5848**

Email: **[info@pccy.org](mailto:info@pccy.org)**

Web: **[www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)**