

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BUCKS COUNTY SCHOOL OFFICIALS, ADVOCATES JOIN STATEWIDE CALL  
FOR FUNDING TO MEET SCHOOL, STUDENT NEEDS**

*Districts are facing a revenue crunch, COVID expenses, and rising mandated costs*

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(May 6, 2021) Local school leaders and education advocates from Bucks County called for greater state investment in schools and to highlight the difficult decisions local leaders face in balancing school budgets.

Superintendents Dr. Sam Lee (Bensalem Township School District), Jason Harris (Morrisville School District), and Dr. Dana Bedden (Centennial School District), and education advocates called on the state legislature to at least increase state funding to cover rising mandated costs this school year and the next – costs that even state legislative leaders admit should not be paid for with one-time federal dollars.

“For the 2020-21 school year alone, those costs are about \$665 million, and districts will be facing an increase of approximately \$485 million next school year. This is unsustainable. And ultimately, those who feel the burden the most are our students, especially those who live in school districts that can’t make up the shortfalls,” said Tomea Sippio-Smith, K-12 Education Policy Director of Public Citizens for Children and Youth.

Decades of underfunding for basic education, special education, and career and technical education – including last year’s flat funding – have continually weakened the fiscal foundation of our schools. The pandemic delivered a one-two punch to Pennsylvania schools already facing a challenging task of budgeting for the 2021-22 school year: a drop in local revenues during the COVID-driven economic slowdown and a spike in costs to educate students and keep them safe during this unprecedented crisis.

School districts are required to finalize their 2021-22 school budgets by the end of May. Today’s event, and five others happening simultaneously around the commonwealth, bring attention to the challenges that schools face to ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed.

Today’s speakers urged the General Assembly and Governor Wolf to invest at least \$1.15 billion in our schools to cover rising mandated costs this school year and the next and that should not

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be paid for with one-time federal dollars. They will add that this should include \$200 million more for special education and \$10 million for career and technical education (CTE).

Pennsylvania ranks 44th in the country in state share of education costs. That means school districts must pick up a higher share, forcing local leaders to make tough decisions about staffing, school programming and property taxes.

That is why the state must provide at least enough funding for schools – including special education and career and technical education – to keep pace with inflation and give school districts the ability to invest in our kids and their education.

*PCCY is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works to improve the lives of children in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties by developing initiatives and advocating for quality health care, child care, public education, and family stability. Learn more on our website ([www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)), Twitter (@pccyteam), and Facebook page (PCCYPage).*

*PA Schools Work is a non-partisan coalition of organizations from across Pennsylvania representing teachers and other educators; urban, suburban and rural communities; and parents and community members working together to advocate for PA public schools, their students and the communities they serve. For more information on PA Schools Work, visit [paschoolswork.org](http://paschoolswork.org).*

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