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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 333 Session of 2012

INTRODUCED BY SCHWANK, COSTA, HUGHES, WOZNIAK, FONTANA, EARLL, WARD, FERLO, YUDICHAK, STACK, BLAKE, WASHINGTON AND LEACH, JUNE 25, 2012

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JUNE 25, 2012

A RESOLUTION

Urging the Governor to develop a comprehensive legislative plan to improve basic education in the public schools of this Commonwealth and to establish an advisory commission to study and make specific recommendations for components of the plan.

WHEREAS, The public schools of this Commonwealth are valued assets that have provided a quality education to countless public school students since their inception; and

WHEREAS, School districts in this Commonwealth have recently experienced significant budget shortfalls over the previous fiscal years due to the combination of severe cuts in State funding and the reduced revenue from local school taxes resulting from the economic downturn; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the severe budget constraints, school districts have reluctantly been faced with the necessity of reducing or eliminating components of their educational programs, such as kindergarten, libraries and the arts and furloughing experienced professional educators to balance their budgets; and

WHEREAS, The structure of State and local funding for school districts needs to be reviewed and revised as needed to address equitable funding; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of components of their educational programs and the necessary furloughs of experienced professional educators raise questions regarding which educational programs and what professional educator-to-student ratios are needed to provide the level of education needed for students to succeed in the current global economy; and

WHEREAS, Several school districts are experiencing deficits that have placed them in severe financial distress; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate respectfully urge the Governor to develop a thoughtful and cohesive, comprehensive legislative plan to improve the education of students in the public schools of this Commonwealth; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Senate respectfully urge the Governor, in order to develop the comprehensive legislative plan for public education, to establish an advisory commission with a sufficient number of advisory commission members consisting of parents, teachers, school administrators, business leaders, higher education leaders and legislators representing a balanced cross section of the citizens of this Commonwealth to study and provide specific recommendations for the components of the plan, including the following issues:

(1) what sources of State and local funding for basic education are the best sources of revenue for reliability and equity;

(2) what educational programs and professional educator-to-student ratios are needed for student success in the

current global economy and how they should be evaluated for impact;

(3) what is the future role of the Department of Education in addressing financially distressed school districts; and

(4) suggestions for revisions to the Public School Code of 1949 and recommendations for shared services and school district consolidation options;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor.