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MEMO



Senate of Pennsylvania

December 13, 2010

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf and Shirley M. Kitchen
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **Payment of Educational Support Services Grants**

We are reintroducing **Senate Bill 348**, legislation that revises the Educational Support Services Program by requiring the Department of Education to issue a check payable to both the grant recipient and the qualified provider for tutoring services rendered.

In 2001 the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved Act 4 which included the Educational Support Services Program, now known as ClassroomPlus. This program enables parents to obtain tutoring assistance for their children in math and reading via a grant of up to \$500. Under Act 4 the grant recipient (i.e., resident parent or guardian) is issued a certificate for each eligible student that he/she takes to an eligible provider. When the \$500 limit has been reached, or when the student is no longer receiving services, the completed certificate is returned by the provider to the parent who within 90 days submits it to the department for payment. The department then makes payment directly to the grant recipient for the amount due.

We have been made aware of a problem involving the reimbursement of qualified providers for tutoring services rendered under the ClassroomPlus program. In some instances the parents who receive the payment directly from the department are not promptly turning the check over to the provider or they fail to pay for the services at all. This has caused some tutoring services to require payment in advance, forcing some parents to go without this critical service for their children.

To help address this situation, our legislation requires the department to issue a check payable to both the grant recipient and the provider. The department must notify the provider that the check has been mailed to the grant recipient. The measure also removes an unnecessary step in the payment process by having the qualified provider submit the completed certificate directly to the department instead of the grant recipient.

We believe these revisions will help ensure that qualified providers receive prompt and timely payment and remain in this valuable program without having to force parents to make advance payment for tutoring services which they can least afford yet their children need.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.