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House of Representatives  
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MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
From: Representative Steve Santarsiero  
Date: February 17, 2011  
Subject: Co-Sponsorship of Legislation: The Back to Educating Our Kids Act

In the very near future, I plan to introduce legislation, *The Back To Educating Our Kids Act*, which will provide incentives for both sides to settle teacher contract disputes and prevent work stoppages so that our schools can go back to doing what they do best: educating our kids.

According to a January Philadelphia Inquirer report, 13 of 63 school districts in Philadelphia's Pennsylvania suburbs are without teacher contract agreements. Many of these stalled negotiations drag on with no sign of settlement and teachers are still working under the terms of their last settlements.

Under my legislation, teachers and school districts would be required to start negotiating earlier than is currently required. The process would be divided into four phases: **negotiation; fact finding; mediation and arbitration**. In each phase, *The Back to Educating Our Kids Act* would require the two sides to meet regularly.

If they get to the arbitration stage without settling, an arbitration decision would be rendered well before the new school year is scheduled to begin.

- If, within 10 days of the arbitration panel's decision, the teachers don't accept that decision without otherwise reaching a settlement, they would **lose the right to strike**.
- If, within 10 days of the arbitration panel's decision, the school board does not accept that decision without otherwise reaching a settlement, its **state funding would be escrowed** only to be released upon settlement being reached.

The Act also prohibits strikes and lockouts from the beginning of the negotiation process through the 10-day, post-arbitration decision period.

*The Back to Educating Our Kids Act* does not favor one side, it puts maximum pressure on both sides to settle or accept the arbitration ruling and consequently it guarantees a quick and fair resolution.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation, please contact Kaitlin Mull at 787-5475 or [kmull@pahouse.net](mailto:kmull@pahouse.net).