




MAR 07 2012

Senate of Pennsylvania

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Edwin B. Erickson 

DATE: March 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Funding for Approved Private Schools (APS)

In the near future, I intend to introduce legislation to address future State funding for Approved Private Schools (APS) and Chartered Schools for the Deaf and Blind. The APSs exist to provide highly specialized education programs and services to eligible students between the age of 2 and 21 with severe and complex disabilities who cannot receive appropriate special education programs in the public school sector.

State funding for APSs and Chartered schools are based on prior year increase of State special education appropriation. These schools have now been level funded for two years, while school districts received significant ARRA funding for special education services during those same years. Without an amendment to Act 70, the APSs and Chartered schools may be receiving no increase in State funding for multiple fiscal years with no end in sight. These schools can't levy taxes or charge parents additional tuition as a means of coping with rising costs and flattened funding.

My legislation just provides for a variation from the standard formula during budget years when there is no increase in the State appropriation for special education. In the year following such a flat line in special education funding, there would be an increase for the APSs and Chartered schools equal to the increase they received the previous fiscal year. For 2012-2013 that would be a 2.075% increase in funding for APSs and Chartered schools, which equals \$2.853 million.

I believe this is a fair solution that provides the necessary funds needed by APSs and Chartered schools that serve our most severely disabled children.

If you are interested in cosponsoring this legislation, please contact Linda Kauffman at 787-1350 or lkauffman@pasen.gov.