

## **For immediate release**

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### **Education Law Center Statement on PA General Assembly's Proposed 2018-19 State Budget**

June 22 – Deborah Gordon Klehr, Executive Director of the Education Law Center, released the following statement today in response to the Pennsylvania General Assembly's proposed 2018-19 state budget:

*The Pennsylvania General Assembly has sent Governor Tom Wolf a compromise state budget agreement that provides modest but needed new funding for Pennsylvania's schoolchildren. The bill includes \$100 million more for basic education funding, an increase of 1.7 percent. It also provides a \$15 million increase in special education, \$25 million in additional funding for Pre-K Counts and Head Start, and \$30 million in new funds for career and technical education. There will be an additional \$60 million for school safety programs.*

*Pennsylvania schools and students urgently need additional resources, and the Education Law Center supports Governor Wolf's plan to sign this budget into law. The legislature has delivered a budget that includes most of the governor's education budget requests.*

*While the additional funding helps, we must be clear that this budget is a small fraction of what is needed for an adequately and equitably funded statewide public education system. Pennsylvania schoolchildren need a much larger increase to meet their basic needs and standards the legislature itself established.*

*The Pennsylvania legislature has in principle recognized the importance of driving out education funding on the basis of need by adopting a funding formula in 2016. But only the new funding above 2015 levels is distributed using the formula, and so only a small fraction of the \$6.1 billion basic education funding appropriation for 2018-19 will be allocated through the fair funding formula.*

*So while we are grateful for this increase, we cannot forget that Pennsylvania has miles to go to achieve a fair and adequate funding system.*

*The additional funds for student safety programs are in response to the nation's tragic school shootings. But we caution that putting armed personnel in schools is not an appropriate or effective solution to school and community violence. And we have seen too many examples where heightened school policing leads to harsher punitive measures aimed at Black and Brown students. We support flexibility in the spending of additional school safety resources so that local communities can implement proven anti-violence programs, trauma-informed approaches, and positive interventions and supports that children need.*

*"Finally, we are troubled to see a reported \$25 million increase in the EITC and OSTC tax credit programs, which redirect prospective tax revenues to non-public schools. The programs lack any meaningful accountability provisions, and there are no nondiscrimination requirements governing the private education organizations that receive indirect support from the state.*

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The Education Law Center-PA ("ELC") is a nonprofit, legal advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. Through legal representation, impact litigation, trainings, and policy advocacy, ELC advances the rights of vulnerable children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, English language learners, LGBTQ students, and children experiencing homelessness. For more information visit <http://www.elc-pa.org/> or follow on Twitter @edlawcenterpa.