

# **Pennsylvania School District Guide to the Federal Stimulus Education Investments**

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
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## For Questions & Additional Information

The Department of Education is available to assist you at any time. For general questions, please email [ra-stimulus-pde@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-stimulus-pde@state.pa.us) or call 717-214-5972. You will receive an initial response within 1 business day.

## Overview: Federal Stimulus Funding for Education

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that President Obama signed into law on February 17th includes an estimated \$2.7 billion in new education aid for Pennsylvania. This document describes the major sources of funding that will be made available directly to school districts through existing federal and state funding formulas. Stimulus funds for education include:

- \$1.6 billion from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
- \$399 million for Title I
- \$456 million for IDEA (special education)

The Commonwealth and its school districts share an enormous responsibility for deploying these resources effectively and quickly. The Department of Education is committed to streamlining the process for getting funding out to school districts, responding to requests for information and technical assistance, and providing approvals to school districts as needed. Bureaucracy will not stand in the way of deploying these vital stimulus funds.

In making local decisions about how to most effectively and quickly draw down and invest stimulus resources, school districts are asked to consider the following:

1. Is the investment going to have a significant impact on increasing student achievement and spurring innovation?
2. Is the investment aligned with the other academic strategies that the district is already pursuing that are effectively boosting achievement of the lowest-performing students?
3. Is the investment possible within the time frames envisioned in the law?
4. Is the investment consistent with the expected duration of the funding stream?

The Department of Education will work closely with school districts to maximize their use of taxpayer dollars provided through the federal stimulus law. School districts are also advised to review the federal guidelines, which are posted at <http://www.ed.gov/recovery>.

### **Stimulus funding for major education programs**

School districts will want to begin planning now for the estimated funding that they will receive directly as a result of the stimulus bill. Estimated direct funding to school districts is shown on the table on the next page. Please note that the table reflects the Administration's proposed allocation of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund; areas noted with an asterisk (\*) may change when the state legislation appropriating these funds is finalized.

<b>Funding stream</b>	<b>How it can be used</b>	<b>Timeline for district use</b>	<b>Approximate direct allocation for all school districts and other LEAs</b>
<b>Total direct aid to districts</b>			<b>\$2.2 billion</b>
State Fiscal Stabilization* – Distributed by Pennsylvania’s school funding formula	As specified in existing state law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount up to rate of inflation can be used to pay for ongoing costs of existing programs</li> <li>Remainder must be used for early childhood education, longer school days and more days in the school year, and to expand other proven academic programs for students</li> </ul>	Provided through FY2009-10 and FY2010-11 basic education subsidies	FY2009-10: \$418 million increase from 2008-09 basic ed subsidy  FY2010-11: \$735 million (\$317 million increase from 2009-10 basic ed subsidy)
State Fiscal Stabilization* – Grants to school districts distributed using the Title I formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modernization, renovation and repair of facilities</li> <li>Basic education</li> <li>Special education</li> <li>Career and technical education</li> <li>Adult and family literacy</li> </ul>	July 1, 2009 until September 30, 2011	\$317 million
Education for the disadvantaged (Title I)	Improving reading and math instruction in high-poverty schools	Spring 2009 until September 30, 2011	\$383 million
Special education (IDEA) – Provided through the Intermediate Units	Providing special education programs and services to students with disabilities	Spring 2009 until September 30, 2011	\$384 million
Technology upgrades (Title II-D)	Integrating technology into the school curriculum and providing related professional development	Fall 2009 until September 30, 2011	\$12.6 million

This table does not include competitive grants and other non-direct aid that will be awarded by the state or federal Department of Education. For more information on these resources, please see the “Other Stimulus Investments in Education” section of this handbook. In addition, Title I allocations awarded under the stimulus package are required to be targeted to LEAs with 5% or more census poverty – which is different than the traditional Title I requirements.

### **How to draw down your school district’s stimulus resources**

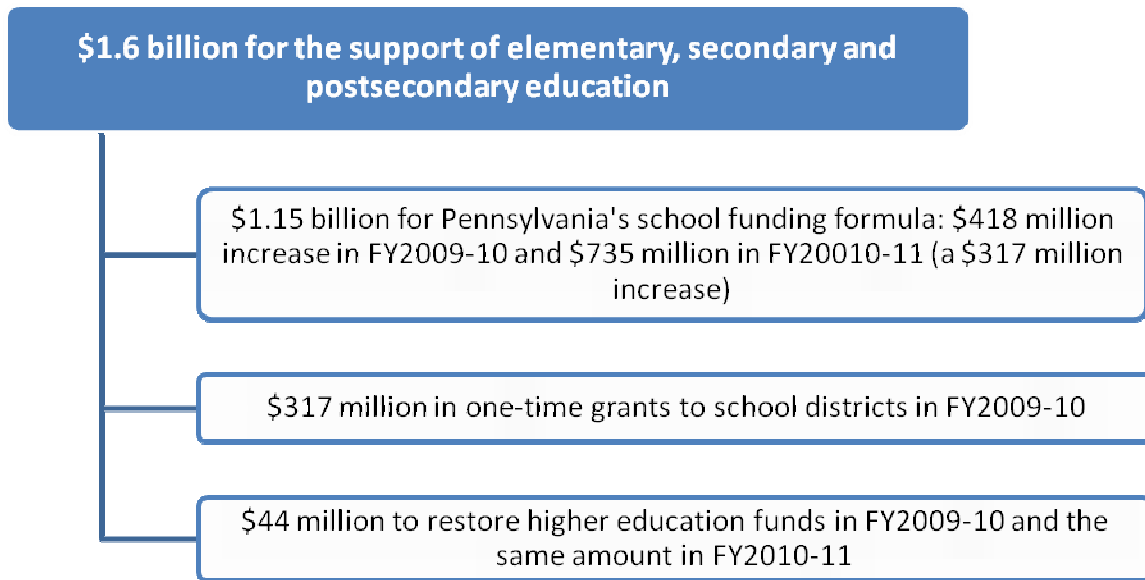
The Department of Education will minimize any additional paperwork that is required as a result of the stimulus bill. The 2009-10 Federal Programs eGrant system will be opened on April 5 for districts to apply for the supplemental Title I funds. When awarded, the supplemental Title II-D funds will be added through an amendment to the application. Districts will likewise use the existing school funding formula online application (known as PA-ACT) for the portion of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund that will support the basic education subsidy.

To ensure transparency and in compliance with the law, school districts will be required to provide information on the use of State Fiscal Stabilization Fund grants that are given directly to school districts outside of the state funding formula. As guidance becomes available about the specific information that will need to be obtained, the Department will provide details on the application process and reporting requirements online at [www.pde.state.pa.us/stimulus](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stimulus).

## The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund

The stimulus package includes a State Fiscal Stabilization Fund that is intended to prevent state budget cuts to critical services like education as well as to enable school districts to make critical one-time investments over the next two years that will result in a better-prepared workforce for the future.

Pennsylvania will receive \$1.9 billion in Fiscal Stabilization resources. Of this amount, \$1.6 billion is intended for education. Governor Rendell has proposed allocating the resources as follows:



### Continuation of Pennsylvania's School Funding Formula

The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund can be used to continue planned increases of a state's existing school funding formula. Pennsylvania's formula was enacted into law in July 2008, and provides a multi-year phase-in designed to move all school districts towards an adequate funding level based on the amount of resources needed for all students to succeed.

The Administration has proposed using the Stabilization Fund to support a \$418 million basic education funding increase in FY2009-10 and an additional \$317 million basic education funding increase in FY2010-11.

The resources will be driven out through the state's existing funding formula, and school districts will be required to use their additional funding as set forth in the state law:

- Any amount that a school district receives up to the rate of inflation (equal to a 4.1% basic education subsidy increase for the 2009-10 school year) can be used as a cost-of-living-adjustment for the general operating costs that school districts face, with no restrictions; and

- If a school district receives an increase higher than inflation, at least 80% of the additional amount must be used to expand programs and services to students from a menu of specific proven academic programs. These priority investments include:
  - Making sure that 100% of the school district's incoming cohort of kindergarten students has access to pre-kindergarten, Head Start or high-quality early childhood education through a community provider with at least a STAR 3 rating;
  - Extending the school day to increase instructional time for students;
  - Extending the school year to increase instructional time for students, such as by adding weekend instruction or lengthening the school year;
  - Tutoring students who are struggling in reading and math;
  - Providing full-day kindergarten to all students;
  - Reducing class size;
  - Offering intensive, proven training to improve teachers' instructional practices and content knowledge; and
  - Implementing new curricula and offering advanced courses.

School districts that receive basic education funding increases above the rate of inflation will continue to be required to submit their investment plans to the Department of Education for review to ensure that funds are used for proven programs and targeted to address the needs of the lowest-achieving students; academically challenged districts must receive Department approval on their basic education subsidy investment plans.

The FY2009-10 proposed school funding formula allocations are posted on the Department of Education's website. The funding formula will be run again for FY2010-11 in February 2010 using updated data.

While some portions of the stimulus – such as the State Fiscal Stabilization grants and the Title I, IDEA and Title II-D increases – are time-limited funds, the Department of Education advises that districts consider the basic education subsidy increase as being built into the state's funding base. As a result, PDE recommends that districts budget these resources for ongoing programs and services that will provide core academic support to students and to expand innovative programs that are achieving the greatest student learning gains.

### **State Fiscal Stabilization Fund grants to school districts**

In addition to the continuation of the state's school funding formula, the Stabilization Fund includes \$317 million in grants to school districts that will be made available in FY2009-10. These funds can be used for any of the following purposes:

- *Modernization, renovation and repair of school facilities*
- *Basic education:* Any activity authorized by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (which includes No Child Left Behind)
- *Special education:* Any activity authorized by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- *Career and technical education:* Any activity authorized under the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

- *Adult and family literacy:* Any activity authorized under the federal Adult and Family Literacy Act

In deciding how to allocate these resources, the Department of Education recommends that school districts fund one-time expenditures that can be funded within two years and do not need to be sustained in the future. School modernization and basic and special education expenditures that meet this criterion are described in the following section.

## Strategically Investing Non-Recurring Federal Funds

Major components of the stimulus package have been described as one-time increases in federal funding designed to avoid state and local budget cuts and to spur investment during the national recession. In making decisions about how to spend stimulus funds, school districts are advised to consider that the following direct grants have a specific and limited time horizon:

1. One-time grants to school districts provided out of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
2. Increase in Title I funding
3. Increase in IDEA (special education) funding
4. Increase in Title II-D (educational technology) funding

Unless the law changes, these funds will no longer be available after the existing appropriations are exhausted. As a result, the Department of Education recommends that school districts use the additional funding in the above categories to fund one-time expenditures that can be spent in the next two years and that do not need to be sustained in the future.

In evaluating potential funding uses, PDE recommends that school districts:

- First, inventory their short-term needs – which could, for example, include additional textbooks, technical expertise or facility upgrades like a new heating system that drives down future building operating costs; and
- Second, rank those needs based on what investments are most important to increasing student learning for the lowest-achieving students – including by considering what strategies are most effective at spurring innovation and increasing achievement that are aligned with the school district's other academic improvement efforts that are underway and working.

Combining the four one-time funding streams, the Department of Education advises that school districts use their one-time funds as follows: after deducting funds needed to avoid layoffs and make up for revenue shortfalls, an estimated 1.5% might be used for operational costs and the balance – 98.5% – invested in the following menu of items.

These uses will increase innovation, boost the achievement of low-achieving students and change the way school districts operate over the long-term by increasing efficiency to drive more resources into the classroom:

Academic Investment	Estimated cost per unit	Funding Stream			
		Title I	SFSF*	Title II-D	IDEA
1. Make up for lost local tax revenue to avoid teacher layoffs and other budget cuts due to the recession			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
2. Complete Classrooms for the Future deployment in high schools and extend to middle schools (see notes below)	\$34,000 per classroom for Apple; \$22,400 per classroom for PC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Improve science labs in middle and high schools (see notes below)	\$285,000 per lab	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Purchase elementary school science exploration kits, replicating the state's successful Science: It's Elementary program	\$500 per classroom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide recruitment bonuses		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
6. Implement a pilot program of principal incentives and/or building-based teacher incentives to determine whether it is effective		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
7. Invest in career and technical education equipment based on needs identified by regional employers (see notes below)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Create a PreK-12 school safety plan with technical assistance, and purchase any necessary school safety resources			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
9. Increase materials in libraries (see notes below)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Purchase adolescent literacy curricula and training, and provide literacy services to students		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. Tutoring and other extended learning opportunities, with a focus on hardware, software and other one-time purchases (see notes below)	If computers are needed: \$280,000 to \$300,000 over 3 years for 30 workstations; if computers are already in place: \$5,500 per year plus \$44 per student	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12. Early childhood education (see notes below)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Academic Investment	Estimated cost per unit	Funding Stream			
		Title I	SFSF*	Title II-D	IDEA
13. Obtain state-of-the art assistive technology devices and provide training in their use to enhance access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14. Provide specific professional development (see notes below)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Develop or expand the capacity to collect and use data to improve teaching and learning		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Train teachers in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate curricula to launch new classes	\$2,300 to \$7,300 per classroom depending on the subject area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
17. Modernize and upgrade school facilities (see notes below)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

\* State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) sub-grants

The use of Title I funding is limited to Title I buildings or specifically to buildings designated as “school-wide” Title I participants. The use of IDEA funds is restricted based on whether eligible students with disabilities are being served by the expenditure. The Department of Education is ready to help school districts identify appropriate funding streams to meet academic priorities.

The Department of Education is already developing new tools that will be made available at no cost to school districts and that school districts therefore do not need to fund, including a voluntary model curriculum in reading, math, science and social studies; diagnostic tools to identify students’ individual learning needs; student longitudinal data systems; and tools to analyze data at the school district and school level. If school districts are interested in developing tools to analyze data at the classroom level, the Department of Education will also create a consortium of districts with similar goals and collaborate on the project.

In addition, and as described below in greater detail, where a number of school districts plan to purchase the same materials and services, the Commonwealth will work to create state-level contracts with vendors in order to aggregate school district purchasing power and achieve the lowest possible costs.

The following notes refer to individual programs from the table on the prior pages:

### **Classrooms for the Future**

Classrooms for the Future is Pennsylvania's successful initiative to transform high school teaching and learning through the use of laptops on student desks and intensive teacher training. It is a proven strategy for increasing student motivation, and school districts can choose to use a portion of their stimulus grants to expand its reach. Governor Rendell has proposed \$22 million in Classrooms for the Future funding in FY2009-10, but given the state's economic situation it is not possible to predict whether the General Assembly will agree to this amount; in addition, the FY2010-11 budget will face similar challenges, and even if fully funded the program would not reach all high school classrooms. Stimulus funds can enable school districts to more rapidly deploy Classrooms for the Future technology, to reach more high school classrooms, and to extend the program to earlier grades.

The Department of Education will continue to offer a single statewide PC contract and a single statewide Apple contract for equipment and technical support from which school districts can purchase.

### **Science lab equipment**

Research shows that student interest in pursuing high-demand science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers is often dampened by the fact that students spend high school in classrooms with outdated, irrelevant technology. Stimulus funds can enable middle and high schools to upgrade their technology and labs to increase student engagement. School districts that choose to invest in this area are advised to couple their equipment purchases with teacher training to ensure that instructional practice is simultaneously upgraded.

### **Career and technical education**

The stimulus funds represent a significant opportunity to upgrade not only career and technical education equipment, but more importantly the programs offered by school districts and by their Area Vocational Technical Schools (AVTS).

Specifically, career and technical education upgrades are most effective when school districts take the following steps:

1. Analyze current and projected labor market data to determine where there is a need for new career and technical education options for students;
2. Involve regional businesses in designing, evaluating and updating the programs;
3. Align curriculum, equipment and teacher selection and training to industry standards; and
4. Ensure that industry credentials are awarded to students who successfully complete the program.

In addition, school districts can hire transition coordinators to work with employers in the community to develop job placements for youths with disabilities.

## **School libraries**

School library investments are a wise use of stimulus funds because they are one-time purchases that can have a long-term impact on student literacy, research skills and interest development. School districts can expand both their print collections and material available through software.

In order to best use these limited funds, the State Librarian recommends that school districts not purchase online resources that are already available through the POWER Library, which can be viewed at [www.powerlibrary.net](http://www.powerlibrary.net). Likewise, it is advised that research materials that are frequently updated, such as encyclopedias, almanacs and directories, not be purchased in print format.

## **Tutoring and other extended learning opportunities**

School districts can use grant funds to support tutoring and other programs that provide more learning time for struggling students. For example, a district can:

- Purchase hardware and software that provide individualized lesson support in reading and math;
- Provide new opportunities for Title I schoolwide programs for secondary school students to use high-quality, online courseware as supplemental learning materials for meeting mathematics and science requirements; and
- Establish or expand fiscally sustainable extended learning opportunities for Title I-eligible students in targeted assistance programs, including activities provided before school, after school, during the summer, or over an extended school year.

## **Early childhood education**

Providing high-quality early childhood education is one of the most effective strategies to increase achievement over a student's lifetime. While increasing the number of pre-kindergarten slots is best supported with ongoing funding streams, there are a number of one-time expenditures that support increased access to and quality of pre-K programs:

- Strengthen and expand early childhood education by providing resources to align a district-wide Title I pre-K program, along with other school district and high-quality community provider programs, with state early learning standards and state content standards for grades K–3;
- Expand the availability and range of inclusive placement options for preschoolers with disabilities by developing the capacity of public and private preschool programs to serve these children;
- Provide joint professional development for school district and community personnel from PA Pre-K Counts sites, local Head Start Grantees, and STAR 2,3 and 4 child care programs;
- Focus on improving the transition into pre-kindergarten and from pre-K to kindergarten, including through resources for Community Engagement Group Transition Teams, visitation for parents and children, and other school readiness services;

- Expand the use of the Work Sampling assessment to additional early childhood students and into kindergarten and first grade;
- Conduct joint registration campaigns for all high-quality pre-school programs; and
- Provide parent leadership support and training for parents in the early education programs.

### **Professional development**

Using stimulus funds for professional development is a good idea if the school district has a specific strategic need – based on student learning data – that can be addressed within two years. For example:

- Establishing a system for identifying and training highly effective teachers to serve as instructional leaders in Title I schoolwide programs and modifying the school schedule to allow for collaboration among the instructional staff;
- Establishing intensive, year-long teacher training for all teachers and the principal in a Title I elementary school in corrective action or restructuring status in order to train teachers to use a new reading curriculum that aggressively works on improving students’ oral language skills and vocabulary or, in some other way, builds teachers’ capacity to address academic achievement problems;
- Providing professional development to teachers in Title I targeted assistance programs on the use of data to inform and improve instruction for Title I-eligible students;
- Using reading or mathematics coaches to provide professional development to teachers in Title I targeted assistance programs;
- Providing intensive district-wide professional development for special education and regular education teachers that focuses on scaling-up, through replication, proven and innovative evidence-based school-wide strategies in reading, math, writing and science, and positive behavioral supports to improve outcomes for students with disabilities; and
- Providing training to all middle school teachers in adolescent literacy based on analysis of middle and high school reading data

PDE recommends that professional development funded through the stimulus focus on the data-driven needs of schools in Improvement and Corrective Action, as identified in the “Getting Results” tools that are part of school improvement planning, and that all professional development funded with stimulus resources be concentrated on improving instructional practice and content knowledge.

### **School modernization**

The federal stimulus law allows school districts to invest their one-time Stabilization Fund grants in facility modernization. Improving infrastructure is an important investment because it creates immediate jobs while setting the stage for improved long-term performance.

*Early childhood education.* Because of the relationship between age-appropriate facilities and student learning outcomes for young children, the Department of Education advises school districts to use a portion of their funds for modernization projects that support early childhood education. These projects can be carried out in both district-owned facilities and the

facilities that are owned and operated by high-quality community providers that serve children in partnership with the school district, including Pre-K Counts and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 operators. For example, existing space can be renovated into developmentally and educationally appropriate activity centers and furnished, and school districts can fund playground improvements. More information is available at the PDE stimulus website.

*Sustainable facilities and energy use.* School districts are highly encouraged to invest in “green” and sustainable products and materials as part of modernization efforts. These upgrades can save school districts money by improving the efficiency of buildings and thereby cutting energy and operating costs. A first step in this process is having an energy audit completed by an Energy Service Company (ESCO).

An ESCO can make it possible for school districts to implement energy conservation measures in existing buildings without investing significant capital funds up-front. School districts instead finance the cost of the project and the annual energy savings pays both the cost of borrowing and the ESCO – while still saving money for the district in the long-run.

For additional information on ESCOs, please contact:

Bruce Stultz  
New Energy Management Coordinator  
Pennsylvania Department of General Services  
414 North Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17125  
(717) 787-5996

To contact an ESCO directly, please refer to the Department of General Services’s list of qualified companies available at the following link or from the PDE stimulus website:  
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=1300&&PageID=269159&level=4&css=L4&mode=2>

In addition to ESCO projects, school districts may wish to consider other capital improvements that can help reduce energy usage and conserve natural resources. The Department of Education will be partnering with other agencies and statewide educational associations to provide extensive information on these types of investments. Information on this initiative, including dates of upcoming regional meetings, will be available at  
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stimulus>.

The Department of Education will also work to collect information from school districts that are considering the purchase of windows, roofing and other material and try to aggregate orders and achieve the best price, in accordance with the School Code bidding provisions.

School districts that are interested in achieving recognition through a green building rating system are advised to pursue a Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) rating through the United States Green Building Council. Additional information on state incentives for green building is available on the PDE stimulus website.

*Allowable uses.* The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund in the stimulus law specifies that funds can be used for “modernization, renovation or repair of public school facilities, including modernization, renovation and repairs that are consistent with a recognized green building rating system.”

Funds cannot be used for:

- Construction of a new school;
- Payment of maintenance costs;
- Stadiums or other facilities primarily used for athletic contests or exhibitions or other events for which admission is charged to the general public;
- Purchase or upgrade of vehicles; and
- Improvement of stand-alone facilities whose purpose is not the education of children, including central office administration, operations or logistical support facilities.

The Department of Education recommends that school districts ensure that they are maximizing their e-rate funding before they use any stimulus grants on Internet wiring or other covered items. If a school district does pursue these expenditures, it is advised to use Title I funds for an applicable school or Title II- D funds rather than Stabilization funds where possible.

*State reimbursement for eligible repair and renovation projects.* School districts that pursue significant renovation projects using their stimulus grants will need to decide whether to also seek state reimbursement for a portion of the construction costs. The advantage to foregoing state reimbursement is that school districts can start construction more quickly by avoiding the PlanCon process; the disadvantage is that school districts would be unable to draw down eligible state funding. Please note that the Department of Education is unable to say in what fiscal year the state match would become available.

To speed the process, the Department will expedite mandate waiver and variance requests. Already filled-in mandate waiver templates are available for download at [www.pde.state.pa.us/stimulus](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stimulus). School districts may download, sign and return these waivers as needed:

- School districts can access already filled-in mandate waiver forms for completion of a district-wide facility study. PDE will approve these submissions within 24 hours of receipt;
- School districts can access already filled-in mandate waiver forms for obtaining approval of all other state and local government agencies before a school district enters into a construction contract. PDE will approve these submissions within 24 hours of receipt; and
- PDE will expedite requests for a variance on the “20-year rule,” which limits the ability of a school district to receive state reimbursement for projects on the same building within two decades.

For school districts that do choose to apply for state reimbursement, the Department of Education will streamline the PlanCon process and commit to a 2-day turnaround on all forms and documents submitted for approval. Please note that projects that include an addition greater

than 20% of the existing square footage of the building will require an Act 34 public hearing, regardless of whether they seek state reimbursement for a construction project.

The Department will facilitate easier school district submission of the required PlanCon forms and faster review and approval as follows:

Traditional PlanCon Process	Streamlined stimulus process for Act 34 projects	Streamlined stimulus process for non-Act 34 projects
A: Project justification B: Schematic review C: Site acquisition (if applicable)	Parts A, B and C can be simultaneously approved by the school board and submitted as a packet to PDE	Parts A, B, C, D and E can be simultaneously approved by the school board and submitted as a packet to PDE
	Must wait at least 30 days after the Act 34 hearing before approving and submitting Part D	
D: Project accounting based on estimates E: Design development	Parts D and E can be simultaneously approved by the school board and submitted as a packet to PDE	
F: Construction documents	PDE will review and approve completed paperwork within 2 days. The school district can advertise for bids, submit Part F, open bids and begin contract paperwork.	
	PDE will review and approve completed paperwork within 2 days	PDE will review and approve completed paperwork within 2 days.
	After approval of Part F, the school district can enter into contracts and start construction.	
G: Project accounting based on bids	Part G is submitted	Part G is submitted
	PDE will review and approve completed paperwork within 2 days; the school district is then informed whether the project is eligible for state reimbursement.	

School districts that do not seek reimbursement on a construction project are typically required to submit a one-page self certification. Under the Department's expedited stimulus implementation, the necessary elements of this certification will be included in the basic information that a school district completes online to draw down its funds, and no separate certification will be required.

*Bonds for school construction.* In addition to the ability to use Stabilization Fund grants for school modernization, the stimulus package includes two additional programs: the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds and the Qualified School Construction Bonds tax credits. The Pennsylvania Department of Education will award Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) allocations, which enable school districts to borrow money interest-free for school construction

projects. The Department will release guidelines in April and make its first round of allocations no later than September 1, 2009. The Pennsylvania Department of Education will also allocate the new Qualified School Construction Bonds that support new construction, repairs and renovations. Additional information on the new bond program will be made available as soon as it is released by the federal government.

## Investing with Transparency & Accountability

As part of Governor Rendell's commitment to ensuring accountability and transparency in the use of all stimulus funds, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will require school districts to provide additional information on the impact of the funding described in this document and the data will be made available to the public via the Recovery.PA.gov website.

School districts are advised to use public school board meetings to describe how they intend to invest stimulus resources and seek input from the community before their plans are finalized.

### **Measuring Performance and Providing Information to the Public**

In addition to the traditional reporting that school districts submit to ensure compliance with federal rules, PDE will ask for data that measure the impact of these investments on students and taxpayers. A preliminary list of planned performance measures follows, and the Department of Education welcomes input from school districts and the public before the measures are finalized:

#### **State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Subgrants**

1. Number of students served. This measure helps the public understand how many children in the school district benefit from an investment. *Data needed: Total student enrollment directly impacted by grant use.*
2. Academic improvement. The most important measure of an academic program's effectiveness is whether it results in increased student achievement. *Data needed: 1) Percent change in number of students on grade level (proficient or advanced) on the reading and math PSSA and 4sight quarterly (if administered); 2) 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress status of impacted school(s).*
3. Layoffs avoided. Two of the chief goals of the federal stimulus package are to avoid additional job loss and to accelerate the nation's academic progress; school district budget cuts that result in program elimination and teacher layoffs are therefore particularly harmful. *Data needed: 1) Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by the average cost of teacher salary and benefits; 2) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 teacher complement in impacted school(s).*
4. Class size impact. Budget cuts that increase class size have the potential to hurt student achievement, while district strategies that reduce class size and enable teachers to individualize instruction can improve student learning. *Data needed: 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 ratio of teaching staff to students in impacted school(s).*
5. Property tax increase avoided. During this national economic crisis, significant property tax increases have the potential to inflict real harm on Pennsylvania homeowners who are

already struggling. *Data needed: Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by 2008-09 current and interim residential real estate taxes collected.*

6. Energy efficiency. Investing one-time resources in school modernization projects that bring down energy costs is an effective strategy for keeping more funds in the classroom for years to come. *Data needed: 1) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 total kilowatt hours by month; 2) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 monthly energy bill.*

## **Title I Allocations**

1. Number of students served. This measure helps the public understand how many children in the school district benefit from an investment. *Data needed: Total Title I student enrollment directly impacted by grant use.*
2. Academic improvement. The most important measure of an academic program's effectiveness is whether it results in increased student achievement. *Data needed: 1) Percent change in number of Title I students on grade level (proficient or advanced) on the reading and math PSSA and 4sight quarterly (if administered); 2) 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress status of impacted school(s).*
3. Layoffs avoided. Two of the chief goals of the federal stimulus package are to avoid additional job loss and to accelerate the nation's academic progress; school district budget cuts that result in program elimination and teacher layoffs are therefore particularly harmful. *Data needed: 1) Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by the average cost of teacher salary and benefits; 2) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 teacher complement in impacted school(s).*
4. Class size impact. Budget cuts that increase class size have the potential to hurt student achievement, while district strategies that reduce class size and enable teachers to individualize instruction can improve student learning. *Data needed: 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 ratio of teaching staff to students in impacted school(s).*
5. Property tax increase avoided. During this national economic crisis, significant property tax increases have the potential to inflict real harm on Pennsylvania homeowners who are already struggling. *Data needed: Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by 2008-09 current and interim residential real estate taxes collected.*

## **Special Education (IDEA)**

1. Number of students served. This measure helps the public understand how many children in the school district benefit from an investment. *Data needed: Total students with disabilities enrollment directly impacted by grant use.*
2. Academic improvement. The most important measure of an academic program's effectiveness is whether it results in increased student achievement. *Data needed: 1) Percent change in number of students with disabilities on grade level (proficient or advanced) on the reading and math PSSA and 4sight quarterly (if administered); 2) 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress status of impacted school(s).*

3. Special education identification. Appropriate intervention and instruction reduces the number of students who are identified as having a disability, particularly in the case of students who are classified as having a learning disability or emotional disability. *Data needed: 1) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 number of students identified for special education (all categories); 2) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 number of students identified as having a learning disability; 3) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 number of students identified as having an emotional disability.*
4. Special education services. Pennsylvania's commitment to providing all students with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) includes increasing the opportunities for students with special needs to receive services in a regular education classroom, because inclusive teaching strategies are most effective. *Data needed: 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 percent of students with disabilities served in regular education classrooms.*
5. Pre-school services. IDEA Part-B Preschool funds are dedicated to providing young children with early access to intensive educational and support services in order to maximize their lifelong educational success and reduce the need for special education in later years. *Data needed: 1) Number of students served; 2) Percent of participants no longer requiring special education by kindergarten; 3) Percent of participants served in pre-school Early Intervention in inclusive classrooms.*
6. Layoffs avoided. Two of the chief goals of the federal stimulus package are to avoid additional job loss and to accelerate the nation's academic progress; school district budget cuts that result in program elimination and teacher layoffs are therefore particularly harmful. *Data needed: 1) Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by the average cost of teacher salary and benefits; 2) 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 teacher complement in impacted school(s).*
7. Class size impact. Budget cuts that increase class size have the potential to hurt student achievement, while district strategies that reduce class size and enable teachers to individualize instruction can improve student learning. *Data needed: 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 ratio of teaching staff serving students with disabilities to the number of students with disabilities in impacted school(s).*
8. Property tax increase avoided. During this national economic crisis, significant property tax increases have the potential to inflict real harm on Pennsylvania homeowners who are already struggling. *Data needed: Total grant used to maintain existing programs divided by 2008-09 current and interim residential real estate taxes collected.*

## **Education Technology (Title II-D)**

1. Number of students served. This measure helps the public understand how many children in the school district benefit from an investment. *Data needed: Total student enrollment directly impacted by grant use.*
2. Number of classrooms served. This measure helps the public understand the scope of the school district's investment. *Data needed: Invoice summary report.*

3. Student engagement. Effective educational technology upgrades are integrated into classroom instruction and dramatically increase student motivation, an important predictor of achievement. *Data needed: School attendance rate compared to prior year.*
4. Hours of training given to teachers. Education technology investments create new opportunities to teach students in fundamentally different ways than the traditional chalk-and-blackboard classroom; because these are new strategies, teachers need professional education and significant support. *Data needed: Act 48 professional development reports.*
5. Hours of training given to administrators. School leadership is essential to maximizing the use of technology to improve classroom instruction, and principals and other school administrators need professional education to effectively implement these strategies. *Data needed: Act 48 professional development reports.*

## Other Stimulus Investments in Education

In addition to the funds that are provided directly to school districts via established federal and state formulas, the stimulus law includes significant funding opportunities through competitive grants and other provisions.

As the Department of Education receives additional guidance from the federal government, it looks forward to:

- allocating funding to school districts and other educational providers where the stimulus bill gives the Department the authority to make funding decisions rather than relying on pre-determined formulas; and
- seeking every available resource that Pennsylvania can invest in increasing student achievement, including working closely with school districts throughout the process.

Funding streams that fall under these categories include:

### Funding that school districts will be able to receive from the state...

1. *Title I school improvement:* Title I schools identified for School Improvement can receive additional funding administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These resources will be targeted to specific proven investments in schools and districts that face severe academic challenges. Awards cannot be made until 2009 Adequate Yearly Progress determinations are finalized after the school year ends; therefore, grants will be announced by September 1, 2009.
2. *Special education:* In addition to the grants that go directly to school districts, the Pennsylvania Department of Education may be eligible to maintain and administer a portion of these stimulus funds. The Department will provide additional information to school districts on its intended uses of these funds should they become available to the Department.
3. *Educational technology:* In addition to the grants that go directly to school districts, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will award nearly \$13 million for technology upgrades and related training to high-need school districts through a competitive grant process. Guidelines will be released in the near future and information will be made available in the eGrants system. Grants will be announced in Fall 2009.
4. *Education of homeless students:* The Pennsylvania Department of Education will award \$2.8 million to school districts to facilitate the enrollment, attendance and success in school of homeless children and youth. The Department will allocate these funds based on homeless child count data. Grants will be announced within 45 days of receipt of the federal guidelines.
5. *School cafeteria upgrades:* The Pennsylvania Department of Education will award \$3.3 million in equipment assistance for school cafeterias. As required by the United States

Department of Agriculture, grants to school districts will be awarded on a competitive basis with preference given to schools where at least 50% of students are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch. The Department of Education will release guidelines within 30 days of the federal government providing additional information to states.

Funding that the state will apply for...

No later than the week of April 6, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will convene working groups including school districts and other stakeholders regarding the following competitive grants:

6. *State incentive grants:* The U.S. Department of Education will award competitive grants designed to spur progress in improving teacher quality, improving the collection and use of data, strengthening standards and assessments, and supporting struggling schools. At least 50% of each state's award must be distributed to school districts.
7. *Teacher quality enhancement:* The U.S. Department of Education will award competitive grants to states in order to reform teacher licensing and certification requirements, create alternative pathways for teacher preparation, and provide alternative pathways for state certification.
8. *Teacher and principal incentives:* The U.S. Department of Education will award competitive grants to states as well as school districts to implement performance-based compensation systems for principals and teachers.
9. *Statewide data systems:* The U.S. Department of Education will award competitive grants to states for "longitudinal data systems" that follow individual students throughout their elementary and secondary education, and into higher education and the workforce.

In addition to these two categories of funding, school districts will be able to apply directly to the United States Department of Education for certain funding, including...

10. *State innovation grants:* The U.S. Department of Education will award competitive grants to school districts that are making significant academic progress. Awards must be used to expand their work, share best practices and enter into partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations.