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MAJORITY LEADER

## House of Representatives

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

**DAVE REED**  
62ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
238 Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

One of the principle constitutional responsibilities of the General Assembly is the passage of a budget for the Commonwealth each year. The process of constructing a budget is one of developing a vision for the future while setting consistent and realistic priorities. The budget should set forth a spending plan that meets the obligations of our state and focuses on the core functions of government. Most importantly, the final budget is a document developed by two co-equal branches of our government – the executive and legislative branches.

Reading Acting Education Secretary Rivera's recent letter to the superintendents of our 500 school districts has left question as to the respect for, and commitment to, this constitutional process.

After listening to your inaugural address and preceding your budget address, much like the other 201 members of the House of Representatives, we sat with the anticipation of a new day for Pennsylvania.

Like our many colleagues in the House and Senate, we followed your campaign closely, your considerable pledges to the voters of Pennsylvania that you were going to be a different governor, one that brought a new line of thinking to what you would consider an antiquated government. Further, through our various conversations with you, you have made a point to sound willing to reach out and avoid the gridlock that plagues our counterparts in Washington, D.C., that partisan politics should be set aside, and that we

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should sit and come to consensus on the issues of the day. While we hope this is still a point of agreement between us, these types of actions cause concern.

This leads us back to the most recent edict from your administration to date. The House Appropriations Committee is only half way through its hearing schedule with your administration's department heads, and the Senate Appropriations Committee began its hearings this week. I also assume you are aware that your budget and its revenue sources have not yet been introduced by anyone in the House or Senate.

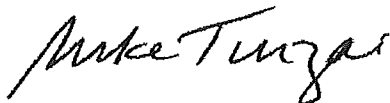
Requiring school districts to develop a plan to implement dollars that have not even been appropriated is just plain wasteful, not to mention lacking legal authority. The document presented on March 3 represents a starting point to our budget discussions as opposed to an ending point. We suspect there will be many points of agreement in the months ahead, but there will also be many points of intense negotiations – many of which will occur in the arena of education.

Our members look forward to a robust discussion on issues like basic education funding, property tax reform, a new basic education funding formula, and pension reform; however, it is important to note that each of these items impacts the actual dollars to be distributed to our school districts.

With this in mind, we respectfully request that you direct your administration to immediately rescind this mandate of our 500 school districts. Accountability for the spending of state education dollars is certainly a laudable goal, but it is a goal that should be put forth at the conclusion of our constitutional budget process with the appropriate legal standing. That day will come, but it is not now.

As the Speaker and Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, we stand ready to work with you to build a spending plan for the state which reflects a shared vision and moves the state forward. With this in mind, we remain committed to ensuring that our co-equal branches of government both avoid unnecessary distractions such as this.

Sincerely,



Mike Turzai  
Speaker



Dave Reed  
Majority Leader

cc: Katie McGinty, Chief of Staff  
Mary Isenhour, Secretary of Legislative Affairs  
Pedro Rivera, Acting Secretary  
PA School District Superintendents ✓