

WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO.: 02-06-03

Resolution Calling for the General Assembly to Provide Critical Support and Mandate Relief Benefitting Public Schools and Students

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's more than 1.7 million public school students deserve the highest quality education; and the state's public schools work best when they have the resources to give all students the opportunities they need to succeed, meet prescribed standards, support adequacy and promote equity; and

WHEREAS, the unexpected closure of school buildings beginning in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic has forced unparalleled challenges upon school districts to stretch funding to meet the needs of students and families with meals, online education programs, technical resources and other needs; and in addition to these unbudgeted expenses, school districts are required to continue paying operational bills, including the costliest expenses such as salaries, pensions, and charter school tuition; and

WHEREAS, mandated school district costs have eclipsed state funding increases; and the Warren County School District's mandated costs for pension and charter school tuition among other expenses, have increased by \$9,378,517.94 from 2010-11 through 2017-2018; and

WHEREAS, due to the economic implications of this pandemic, school districts statewide face declining local revenue collection that is projected at more than \$325 million this year and as much as an additional \$1 billion in local revenue next year; and the Warren County School District is facing projected local deficits of \$1,313,864 and school districts need support from the General Assembly as they continue to navigate these developing situations; and

WHEREAS, the Warren County School District recognizes the Commonwealth will experience significant shortfalls in revenue; and that the federal CARES Act funds will provide important support to help maintain education funding levels; and the District believes that the use of federal funds by the state should not supplant the allocation of critically-needed state subsidies in current or future budgets; and

WHEREAS, as school districts must confront numerous challenges in order to re-open schools, they face difficult decisions about how to allocate declining financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services with the physical and mental health and safety of their students in mind; and school districts need certainty from the state on matters of funding so they can plan and budget appropriately for the entire 2020-21 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, school districts could realize cost savings through the enactment of broad, long-term relief from unfunded and underfunded mandates that consume much of district budgets; and one specific solution is the enactment of a permanent mandate waiver program that could provide significant savings, both in terms of dollars and efficiency, as well as reduce the number of burdensome mandates placed on schools.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Warren County School District Board of School Directors along with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association calls upon the General Assembly to prioritize public education in the commonwealth's 2020-21 state budget and, at a minimum, maintain the 2019-20 level of state investments for public education without reductions in basic education, special education and other critical subsidies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Warren County School District Board of School Directors calls upon the General Assembly to provide costs savings to school districts through approval of a permanent mandate waiver program which would enable districts to improve instructional programs or operate in a more effective, efficient and economical manner.

Adopted this 8th day of June, 2020.

Signed,

School Board President

Board Secretary