

# **Schools in Crisis - SOS Forum**

**January 12, 2011**

*Sponsored by the Hourglass and the Pennsylvania Economy League*

## **Changing the Rules**

### **Ideas for Rule Changes**

- Establish a standard review process for all teachers and administrators (To greatly reduce lawsuits.) Allow schools to terminate any employee for unsatisfactory performance subject to appropriate due process rights as in most other organizations.
- Establish statutory ability to eliminate positions and furlough employees for economic reasons.
- Allow the hiring of retired teachers per hour, no benefits. Remember goal is to teach students.
- Reduce school funding restrictions. All money transferred to school districts from the state to the maximum extent possible should be unrestricted. By bestowing trust in local schools they can stretch fewer dollars to the maximum. Rescind Act 1 requirement that new dollars above Act 1 must be spent on new programs or program expansion.
- Begin funding education on a two-year basis. The State should establish an education budget by March to correspond with the State and school's fiscal years. Schools must know the amount of state funding they can anticipate receiving when they prepare their very tight budgets.
- Change state certification rules.
- Establish a moratorium for General Assembly (GA) mandates without full cost/benefit analysis and GA paying for the new mandate.
- Eliminate arbitration/mediation or require arbitrators to consider specifically the financial condition of the district and the community which it serves.
- Eliminate prevailing wage from school construction or at least raise the \$ 25,000 threshold significantly. Streamline the current slow approval process of new construction.
- Re-instate the mandate waiver process which saves time and cost for school purchases and have it apply to all statutory provisions which affect public school districts. How about a local option for a single prime contractor like private industry?
- Remove part-time workers from retirement coverage.
- Rescind Keystone Exams, use Federal only.
- Define a teacher's day based upon professional responsibility, not blue-collar hourly rate.
- Allow grouping of multiple districts for special education. Somehow control the double digit increase in special education cost annually. Politically sensitive but very expensive.