

Proposed 2008-09 budget targets funding for programs that enhance student achievement

PHILADELPHIA, PA: Ellen Eisenberg, executive director of the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI), an embedded one-on-one instructional coaching, mentoring, and professional development program for high school educators, today praised Governor Edward G. Rendell's proposed 2008-09 General Fund budget, which would strengthen the state's education system by targeting investments for programs proven to enhance student achievement.

"The governor's budget puts our students in a better position to succeed by making professional development and one-on-one instructional coaching part of the equation for raising test scores in reading, writing and math," Eisenberg said. "One-on-one instructional coaching, mentoring, and intensive teacher training programs like PAHSCI improve the classroom dynamic, changing the way teachers teach and students learn."

PAHSCI is at the forefront of "instructional coaching." Formed in 2005, PAHSCI is the nation's only multi-tiered teacher coaching initiative --- providing trained teacher-leaders, called coaches, to schools and school districts. Coaches and school principals, in turn, receive professional and program support from the initiative's team of mentors and facilitators.

The governor's proposed budget for the Department of Education provides more support to help school districts meet students' needs by targeting investments in proven programs, such as the administration's "Classrooms of the Future" initiative. The spending plan includes a \$20 million increase for intensive teacher training to expand the program.

The Department of Education, a PAHSCI partner, has adopted the initiative's coaching language and standards and utilizes PAHSCI's services when facilitating professional development for its statewide coaching programs, including "Classrooms of the Future."

The governor's proposed budget also includes new programs to make for a more rigorous and challenging high school experience, and provides school districts with new tools for identifying and helping struggling students and enhancing teacher training to ensure achievements.

PAHSCI already is changing teaching and learning in some of the state's lowest performing schools. Preliminary data from the last two years show marked progress in math and reading student achievement scores in schools supported by PAHSCI --- 18 of 21 schools with data for 2004 and 2007 exceeded the state percentage change in the proportion of students reaching "advanced" or "proficient" in math, and 15 of 21 schools exceeded the same in reading.

Created as a partnership between The Annenberg Foundation and the Department of Education, PAHSCI is in the final year of its \$31 million program to provide a math and literacy coach for every 600 students in participating schools. PAHSCI currently operates in 24 high schools in 15 school districts across the state, serving some 32,000 students statewide.

PAHSCI currently is working to preserve and expand its coaching model, whether through

state or federal funding, foundation support or some public-private partnership. For more information, visit www.pacoaching.org.