



Wrongly blaming Corbett for school cutbacks

Jeff Hawkes' Feb. 14 column "After cuts, poor schools hit again," is fundamentally flawed and misrepresents the facts.

First, Gov. Corbett did not cut \$1 billion from public schools. The press needs to end this false campaign that has gone on unabated for too long.

Pennsylvania's public schools lost \$1 billion as a result of the federal government's funding cuts to schools, not Gov. Corbett's.

The press seems to have intentionally ignored the fact that, in 2009, the president and Congress enacted the \$800 billion stimulus program that funneled more than \$1 billion into Pennsylvania's public schools for two years. When the program ended, schools lost money. Gov. Corbett continues to be wrongly blamed for this loss of federal funds.

In fact, since taking office, the governor has increased the amount state taxpayers invest in public schools by \$1.25 billion -- a 15 percent increase.

Second, the \$90 million increase in the Basic Education Funding line item that Gov. Corbett proposed for the 2013-14 state budget would be distributed to school districts based on the number of students in each district and a district's aid ratio, or relative wealth. Therefore, the less wealthy a school district is the more state dollars it will receive.

Based on just the \$90 million increase in funding, adjusted by each district's aid ratio,

Lancaster would receive an additional \$69 per student and Columbia Borough would receive an additional \$68 per student.

In comparison, Manheim Township School District would receive an additional \$36 per student and Conestoga Valley School District would receive an additional \$32 per student.

Hawkes' is joined by the Education Law Center and Rep. Mike Sturla in believing that wealthier districts make out better than less wealthy districts.

They are wrong.

Tim Eller, Press Secretary, Pa. Department of Education