



Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

Joan L. Benso, *President and CEO*
Phone: 717-236-5680
Fax: 717-236-7745

116 Pine Street, Suite 430
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1244
www.papartnerships.org

David S. Feinberg
Chair of the Board

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CONTACT: Kathy Geller Myers
717-236-5680; 717-903-3716 (mobile)
kgmyers@papartnerships.org

Getting Dropouts Back on Track is Economic Growth Strategy for PA
PPC Report Shows Benefits of Re-Engaging Dropouts in Education & Workforce
Each high school dropout costs \$683 more annually than he/she contributes in taxes

(HARRISBURG), Jan. 27, 2010 – Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) today released a report that shows there are nearly 120,000 high school dropouts ages 16-24 who cost state, local and federal governments money through lost revenue, increased crime and social spending on government programs. A dropout in Pennsylvania consumes \$683 *more* annually in publicly-funded programs than he or she contributes in taxes. Conversely, Pennsylvania high school graduates who possess some postsecondary education or an associate's degree contribute \$9,485 *more* annually in taxes than they consume in government spending. In "Re-engaging High School Dropouts as a Growth Strategy for Pennsylvania," PPC states that Pennsylvania must do more to help young people who have dropped out of high school re-engage in educational opportunities that result in a high school diploma or GED coupled with a postsecondary and/or industry credential.

The report shows that if Pennsylvania dropouts (up to age 25) were to re-connect to their education and earn a high school credential plus attend some postsecondary education or earn an associate's degree, instead of costing governments some \$81 million each year in publicly-funded programs, they would contribute more than \$1.1 billion. More than 70 percent of jobs in Pennsylvania today require workers with education beyond the high school credential. Good jobs for dropouts that pay self/family-sustaining wages are scarce.

"This report clearly shows that high school dropouts are a drain on Pennsylvania's economy," said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). "The Commonwealth has endured significant revenue shortfalls the past few years that have contributed to a bleak economic picture for Pennsylvanians. But by re-engaging high school dropouts in their education and the workforce and helping them earn family-sustaining wages that contribute to the revenue base, we can help not only this population – but Pennsylvania – get back on track."

(MORE)



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The report is part of a new initiative called Operation Restart, dedicated to making dropout re-engagement a public policy priority for Pennsylvania in 2010 and beyond. In its report, PPC outlines a four-pronged agenda to address the issue that includes state-level initiatives; local partnerships; education models and support services. For example, at the state level, PPC calls on the Commonwealth to convene a cross-departmental workgroup to assure high school dropouts have opportunities to re-engage in quality programs that lead to high school and postsecondary credentials. Local partnerships will allow for community-wide assessments of dropout populations so comprehensive plans to address the educational re-engagement of area dropouts can be explored and implemented.

PPC also details several education models and support services to aid in dropout re-engagement including providing funding for small, recovery-focused high schools for dropouts; providing incentives to school districts to re-engage their dropouts; assuring affordability of postsecondary education in Pennsylvania; establishing local/regional re-engagement centers across the state, and authorizing tax credits for employers who provide part-time employment to former dropouts who have re-enrolled in educational programming.

“Pennsylvania can and must do more to help high school dropouts re-connect to their education and the workforce,” Benso said. “It’s not only sound policy for our young people, but sound economic policy for Pennsylvania as well.”

More information on this report or Operation Restart may be obtained by visiting www.operationrestart.org or by calling Kathy Geller Myers, PPC Communications Director, 717-236-5680 or kgmyers@papartnerships.org

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