



Education Update

From the Senate Education Committee

FEBRUARY 7, 2005

Administration Releases Accountability Block Grant Report

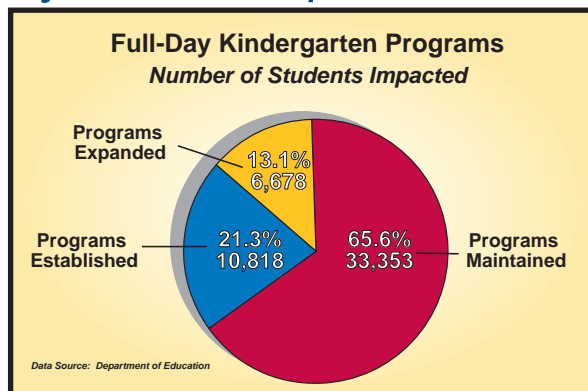
On February 1, Governor Edward Rendell released the first annual report on the \$200 million accountability block grant program that the General Assembly approved in December, 2003.

According to the report, the largest single percentage of block grant funds was directed to full-day kindergarten programs. However, the majority of students impacted by those funds, or 65.6%, are enrolled in school districts that offered full-day kindergarten prior to the block grant program.

Only 21.3% of students impacted by full-day kindergarten funding are enrolled in newly established programs and 13.1% are in expanded programs.

Under the block grant program, each Pennsylvania school district receives an annual grant amount based on its student population, its market value/income aid ratio and the percentage of its students scoring above and below proficient on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exam.

School districts can elect to use grant funds on one or more of eleven different programs, including locally-designed initiatives.



Uses of Block Grant Funds

Program	Grant \$	% of Total	# of sd *	% of Total
Pre-Kindergarten	9,546,965	4.8 %	38	3.7%
Full-Day Kindergarten	111,309,695	55.7%	302	29.2%
Class Size reduction	13,532,942	6.8%	103	10.0%
Social and Health services	4,394,848	2.2%	61	5.9%
Tutoring	6,864,168	3.4%	91	8.8%
Subgroups Support	16,259,930	8.1%	111	10.7%
Science and Applied Knowledge	8,566,982	4.3%	86	8.3%
Professional Development	6,791,679	3.4%	99	9.6%
Literacy and Math Coaches	16,315,226	8.2%	106	10.3%
Teacher Incentives	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Local Option	6,417,565	3.2%	37	3.6%

* school districts can use block grant funds for more than one program

Source: Department of Education

PHEAA Agrees to Expand Student Aid Programs

Under an agreement reached by leaders of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), Governor Edward Rendell and legislative leaders, the student loan servicing agency will commit an additional \$55 million to student aid programs.

In an announcement made on February 3, PHEAA outlined the agreement which includes additional grant aid, an additional \$7.5 million for the Higher Education Gifts Initiative, and \$10 million for a new grant program for adults returning to post-secondary school.

National student loan servicing agency Sallie Mae has expressed interest in acquiring PHEAA. At a December 27 board meeting, the PHEAA board of directors unanimously approved a resolution stating that the agency is not for sale.

Senate Education Committee

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Senator James J. Rhoades
Chairman

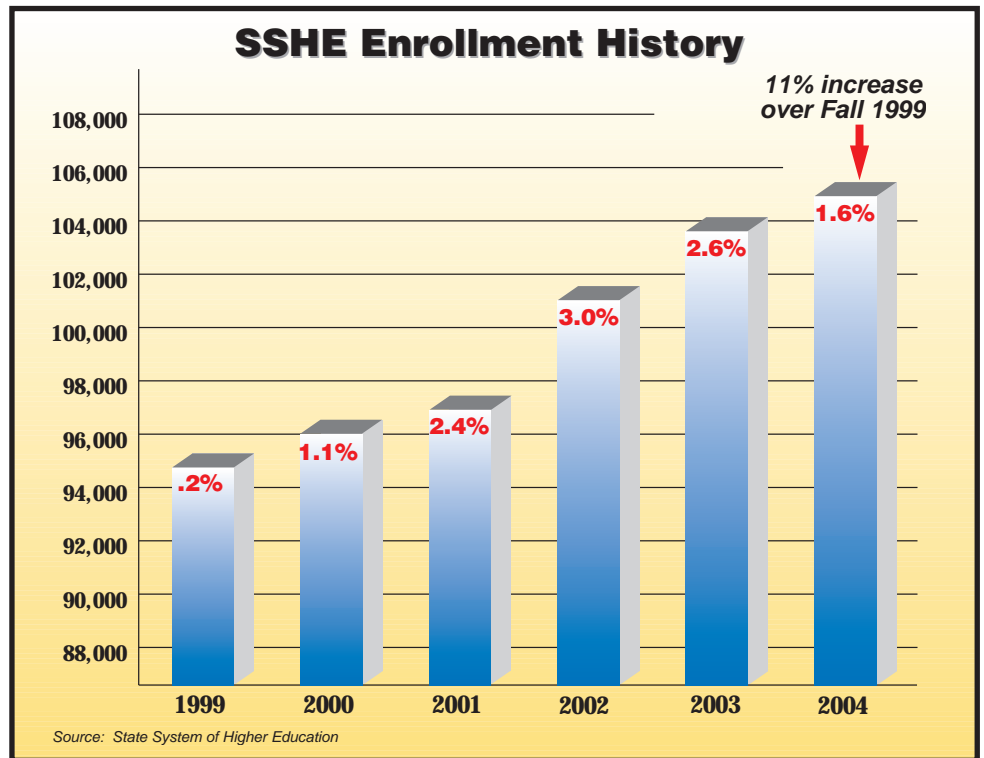
David L. Broderic
Executive Director

State System Posts Significant Enrollment Increases Since 1999

According to the State System of Higher Education (SSHE), student enrollment in the fourteen state system universities has increased by 11% since 1999.

As of September, 2003, the last year for which complete data is available, SSHE universities enrolled 104,216 students. Of that number, 87,094, or 83.6%, are considered full-time and 91,301, or 87.6%, are undergraduates.

Full-time tuition, with room and board, for Pennsylvania residents in the 2003-2004 school year was \$4,970. For non-residents, tuition, room and board was \$11,496.



Technical Assistance Package Clears Committee

On February 2, the Senate Education Committee unanimously approved a three-bill package aimed at providing technical assistance to school districts as they work to meet the academic achievement goals of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Senator Rhoades is the prime sponsor of all three bills – Senate Bills 146, 147 and 148.

Senate Bill 146 would authorize intermediate units to coordinate academic improvement teams for school districts that have schools on the NCLB warning list because they missed academic performance tar-

gets in reading or mathematics. The teams would create an improvement plan for an eligible school district to improve academic performance before the school district moves to NCLB's school improvement phase.

Senate Bill 147 would direct the Department of Education to provide technical assistance to school districts on the NCLB warning, school improvement or corrective action lists upon request. Senate Bill 148 would establish a clearinghouse of professional development programs in the Department.

All three bills have been referred to

the Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal notes

Senate Education Committee Activities

Tuesday, February 8

Room 461

Main Capitol Building

11:00 a.m.

Committee Meeting

Senate Bills 143 and 145

For more information or detailed analyses of these topics, contact the Senate Education Committee staff at 787-2637.