

Press Release
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Chester Community Charter School and Chester Upland School District Join Forces In a Plan to Avert Funding Crisis

Chester, PA, January 27, 2012– Representatives of the Chester Community Charter School and Chester Upland School District today announced that they have identified approximately \$28.5 million of available, previously budgeted State funds, and previously approved State loan proceeds, that could conceivably be provided to the Chester schools to ensure funding for both, throughout the balance of the school year ending in June 2012.

In recent weeks, there has been a great deal of speculation about whether the public school or the charter school would be adequately funded to avert financial distress and, even, closure, in coming months.

Participating in the announcement were three senior officials from each of the entities. From Chester Upland School District there were Dr. Tony Watson, acting superintendent; Thomas Persing, acting deputy superintendent and Robert Burchak, chief financial officer.

Chester Community Charter School's participants included: Hon. Spencer B. Seaton, chairman of the CCCS Board; Dr. David Clark, CEO; and Dr. Linda Portlock, deputy superintendent.

As was explained by Dr. Clark and Dr. Persing, the two entities have worked together to identify the following potential sources of funds:

- \$10,262,520 of previously budgeted Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) appropriations (one percent of the state's special education appropriations) for the 2011-2012 school year. These funds will be drawn from the Commonwealth's Special Education Contingency funds.
- Approximately \$4.5 million in a separate, currently unencumbered fund, the majority of which was set aside primarily for Chester-Upland, and had been previously paid annually to the District.
- \$5 million from a Support for Public and Education Fund that had previously been available to the school district, and
- \$8.7 million of proceeds from a loan fund that PDE had previously extended to CUSD and, subsequently, recouped.

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These funding streams, once approved by the Corbett administration, could be made immediately available to the CUSD and CCCS, providing sufficient funds to both, to support the children's education through the balance of the school year.

Commenting on the potential resolution of the longstanding crisis, Dr. Persing said, "With the Governor's approval, this package of funds would allow the teachers and administrators at both institutions to return to the task of delivering quality education to the 7,000 students in Chester's schools, without the imminent threat of school closures."

"This joint announcement sends an important message that the city of Chester, together with its parents and educators, is united in wanting to ensure what is best for the children's futures," said Dr. Clark. "This joint proposal is especially appropriate when we realize that nearly 40 percent of Chester Community Charter School parents also have at least one other child that attends a traditional CUSD public school. It's the community's wish that both entities be appropriately funded and that they provide strong educational services to these children."

"We trust," Clark concluded, "that PDE and our elected officials in Harrisburg appreciate how important this plan is for the entire community and that they work together to ensure that it is approved."

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Photo 1



Caption 1

From left, Robert Burchack, CFO, Chester Upland School District; Dr. Tony Watson, acting superintendent, Chester Upland School District; Dr. David Clark, CEO, Chester Community Charter School; Dr. Linda Portlock, deputy superintendent, Chester Community Charter School; and Judge Spencer Seaton, chairman of the board, Chester Community Charter School.