

TO: Honorable Members of the PA House of Representatives
FROM: Sam Denisco, Vice President, Government Affairs
DATE: Oct. 21, 2011
RE: Co-sponsorship of Teacher Evaluation Systems Legislation

On behalf of its thousands of statewide member businesses of all sizes and crossing all industry sectors, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry is writing you to respectfully request your co-sponsorship of legislation being circulated by state Rep. Ryan Aument. This legislation would incorporate student performance into the teacher evaluation process.

Currently, the inefficient teacher evaluation system in Pennsylvania rates teachers as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In the 2009-10 school year, 99.4 percent of all teachers were rated as satisfactory. Conversely, student drop-out rates have increased and test scores have declined. It is more important than ever that teachers are provided with useful feedback that can be used to improve their performance in the classroom, thereby fostering greater student achievement.

Within the business community, it is common to establish performance goals and benchmarks for employees. This provides employees with the opportunity to evaluate and improve upon their performance. At present, Pennsylvania's education system provides teachers with no such opportunity.

The Pennsylvania Chamber has endorsed Gov. Tom Corbett's education reform agenda and recognizes the importance of these reforms to the state's long-term competitiveness. Improving the teacher evaluation process to require school districts to incorporate student achievement is a critical component of these reforms. This proposal is consistent with our member driven policy which promotes systemic improvements to Pennsylvania public education system that increase the quality of education and overall student achievement. The Chamber views this legislation as a step which will help to bridge the gap that currently exists between employer needs and employee skill sets. Moreover, this system will serve to hold teachers accountable and ensure that our children receive an education that will adequately prepare them for the workforce. Through enactment of this legislation, teachers will be able to continuously grow their teaching skills and in turn, students will benefit. The PA Chamber respectfully asks for your co-sponsorship of this important initiative.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 717 720-5580 or e-mail me at sdenisco@pachamber.org.