



**For Immediate Release:**  
June 17, 2008

**Information:**  
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**Good Schools Pennsylvania, Sto-Rox and McKeesport School Districts host  
"Saving Whoville" in Capitol Rotunda:  
*A demonstration of the importance of adequate school funding***

**(Harrisburg, PA)** The Capitol Rotunda became the setting June 17 for a Pennsylvania version of the Dr. Seuss tale "Horton Hears a Who," which depicts the challenges confronting the tiny village of Whoville, existing on a speck of dust and in peril of being tossed into a "hot steaming kettle of Beezle Nut Oil."

During the past year, Good Schools Pennsylvania has used its "Saving Whoville" demonstration to assist students, parents, teachers, administrators and other citizens in understanding the education finance policies that threaten their communities.

As demonstrated in this interactive simulation, because of a broken and ineffective state school funding formula, many schools and students lack the resources they need to meet the state's academic standards.

"Sto-Rox School District has much in common with Whoville," said Ed Martiz, a Sto-Rox school board member who joined Good Schools Pennsylvania in the Capitol on June 17. "We are a poor school district of 1,500 students, wrestling with various challenges resulting from the collapse of the steel mill industry in the early '80s."

"Because of Pennsylvania's over-reliance on local property taxes to support public education, our small tax base forces us to shoulder one of the highest tax rates in the state," Maritz said. "Despite this high tax effort, we are still unable to raise enough revenue to provide many of the basics that our students need and deserve. In short, Pennsylvania's system of education finance is failing our children, discouraging investment in our community, increasing demographic tensions, and weakening our community."

In the Dr. Seuss story, Horton the elephant, along with the mayor of Whoville, persuades every citizen of Whoville to speak up until they are heard, and thus they are able to save their community. Expanding on that theme, Good Schools Pennsylvania has used its "Saving Whoville" demonstration to help citizens explore meaningful opportunities to advocate for an accountable statewide school funding formula that honors the principles of adequacy, equity, efficiency, and predictability.

In addition to holding "Saving Whoville" demonstrations around the state, Good Schools Pennsylvania, along with the Education Law Center, invited students from several school districts to use photography to record what they thought was important for the public to know about their education. The photos, compiled in an exhibit called "Eyes on Education," are on display in the state capitol's East Wing Rotunda during the week of June 16.

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"Every student deserves to go to a high quality school because we are the future of the world," wrote Julia Nicotra, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Sto-Rox School District in a caption accompanying her photo. "We deserve to come to school and not have to worry about the conditions we learn in. Our ceilings are falling in and in some classrooms there are too many students. I think every school should have the same funding. I hope you take a look at our photos and try to help us make a difference."

"It's too late for the class of 2008 to have the resources they need, but it's not too late for the class of 2020 entering our schools in September," said Jeannetta Thomas, from Penn State Educational Partnership Program located in McKeesport, Allegheny County. "There is no greater priority this month than for the General Assembly to enact a new school funding formula. The success of our schools, our students, and our communities depends on it."

*Goods Schools Pennsylvania supports the fundamental right of all children to a high quality public education. Our mission is to build a network of citizens who are informed and mobilized for comprehensive education reform, including: adequate funds that are fairly distributed, use of proven educational practices to meet a standard of excellence, and accountability measures to ensure every child is given an opportunity to achieve at high levels.*

*To find out how you can host a Saving Whoville demonstration or the Eyes on Education photo exhibit in your community, contact Good Schools Pennsylvania at (866-720-4086) or [info@goodschoolspa.org](mailto:info@goodschoolspa.org).*

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### **Saving Whoville Participants:**

Aimee Lefevers  
Western Pennsylvania Field Organizer, Good Schools Pennsylvania

Anastasia Toth,  
12<sup>th</sup> grade, Sto-Rox High School

Andrew Fleming  
11<sup>th</sup> grade, Sto-Rox High school

Shawn Riley  
11<sup>th</sup> grade, Sto-Rox High School

Ed Maritz  
School Board Director, Sto-Rox School District

Jeannetta Thomas  
Education Diversity Specialist  
Penn State Educational Partnership Program, Penn State University Allegheny County (McKeesport)

Gregory Jordan-Detamore  
10<sup>th</sup> grade, Masterman High School