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**Good Schools Pennsylvania and the Education Law Center release lesson plan
for students to solve state education budget impasse**

Philadelphia, Pa. (August 27, 2009) - Do you think you can save your school and your state from Pennsylvania's budget impasse? That is the question the Education Law Center and Good Schools Pennsylvania are posing to high school students this fall.

As students return to school after their summer recess, Pennsylvania's fiscal year 2009-10 budget - now more than 50 days overdue - is still unfinished. As a result, state payments to school districts have been held up, school boards are making decisions around borrowing money, cutting teaching staff and programs, and raising local taxes. In order to help students understand the forces influencing their educational experience, Good Schools Pennsylvania and the Education Law Center have prepared State Budget 101: A lesson plan for students to solve Pennsylvania's budget problems (without politics).

"The budget debate in Harrisburg may feel very far removed to many students," said Baruch Kintisch, manager of policy advocacy for the Education Law Center. "But the reality is that students and schools are among those most dependent on the outcome of budget negotiations. They should have the opportunity to understand and deliberate on the decisions being made in Harrisburg that directly affect them."

The 90-minute State Budget 101 lesson plan walks students through the mechanics of Pennsylvania's state budget. Students will receive a background primer and definitions of language consistent with the actual state budget and methods used to balance it. They will then be asked to consider specific proposals and make decisions in order to balance the education budget, which are modeled after the debate taking place in Harrisburg right now: Should they cut expenditures by reducing state spending and services, raise revenue through taxation or user fees, or a combination? Students will not play partisan roles, but rather, will work in collaborative small groups with the goal of producing a balanced state education budget.

"The State Budget 101 lesson plan is not just a civics lesson," said Janis Risch, director of Good Schools Pennsylvania. "Good Schools Pennsylvania and the Education Law Center are optimistic that this lesson plan will be a valuable tool in illustrating that a state budget can be crafted that will support students and schools while strengthening communities in Pennsylvania."

The State Budget 101 lesson plan is available online at www.elc-pa.org/statebudget101.html or www.goodschoolspa.org/pdf/take_action/STATE%20BUDGET%20101.pdf.

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