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## **The Crisis in Public Education**

No one needs to tell you that the economic crisis gripping our nation runs deeper and wider than any in recent memory. Descriptions of the economic turmoil – the credit crunch, layoffs, and foreclosures – are sprawled across the national and local media. *What gets lost in the headlines is **the gathering storm** quietly brewing at the heart of public education in this country.* Sadly, the federal stimulus package will not resolve all the educational shortfalls facing our public school students.

Federal and state funding, even with local tax support, is no longer enough to provide the educational fundamentals required for our children to be competitive in the new global economy or to be fully productive citizens. Local school districts, reluctant to increase taxes, will be forced to let important education programs go by the wayside.

Today's tough economy spells bad news for public schools. As states across the country squeeze already tight public school budgets, school districts are forced to do their best with the bare essentials. Our state, our community and our school district are not immune from these problems. That's why the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is standing up and speaking out for the Northwestern Lehigh School District.

### **What you don't hear is the story we are about to tell.**

*This is a story of incredible people – parents, teachers, school and community leaders, and alumni – who commit their time and resources to assuring that a quality, public education is available to every child – regardless of family status or income. This is a*

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story of people who believe that a child's capacities are not fixed at birth and who know that it is the family and local community that shape our earliest learning from preschool to high school graduation day. *This is a story of people who believe that by investing in childhood education, you invest in the future of a community.*

### **The Need Has Never Been Greater**

Local property taxes and state funds are the traditional cornerstones of school budget revenues. These revenue sources are in peril and they are unlikely to return to their present level in the foreseeable future. Forty-four states, including Pennsylvania, have already reported severe revenue deficits or budget shortfalls for 2009. It is not likely that they will be able to provide additional funding to make up for the loss of property tax revenue. The money that trickles down from the federal stimulus package will not provide our district with a cure all to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

### **It's Now or Never**

We are presented with a *now or never* scenario. Our children don't have the luxury of riding out these tough times in the hopes things will get better. Relying on short-term solutions to the school budget shortfalls will inevitably lead to long-term consequences for our youth and for our community. Our children need an environment where they can dare to dream big dreams *now*. Our foundation encourages outside the box thinking in order to create a new vision for public education. Such thinking is necessary to support the educational fundamentals required for our children to be competitive in the new global economy or to be fully productive citizens.

### **Life in Today's Classroom**

The vast majority of us understand public education through the lens of our own experience. For those of us without children or grandchildren in the public school system, it is difficult to understand how dramatically the system has changed since they

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attended school. It may have been 20, 30 or more years since you walked into a public school classroom.

The classroom is evolving rapidly. Smart boards, in-house TV studios and advanced computer hardware and software are changing how students learn and are expanding their exposure to a wider range of subjects. Public school districts not developing **new** sources of funding **now** will find it increasingly difficult to offer educational excellence and innovative programming in the future.

### **The Face of Your Educational Foundation**

The key to achieving a reliable new foundation to support the future of the Northwestern Lehigh School District will require well-designed strategies for revenue generation and cost shifting and sharing. This includes nurturing new partnerships with corporate and business organizations. Founded in 2006, the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is a non-profit public-private partnership dedicated to improving the future of public education in the Northwestern Lehigh School District. The purpose of the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is two fold:

- **Fundraiser:** We seek to provide funding for programs and projects that are in danger or can be no longer supported by the school district budget.
- **Advocate:** We are *change agents* and *advocates* in the Northwestern Lehigh community. As an advocate, we want you to know, understand and contribute to our mission to provide a first-rate education to the children of our community.

As a fundraiser and an advocate, the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is dedicated to:

- ***Making*** our school district a welcome home for families
- ***Enabling*** our children and youth to thrive
- ***Strengthening*** our entire community

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Among this year's milestones and accomplishments:

- Raised \$125,000 in EITC funds. These funds were used to purchase a digital marquis and enrich the Broadcasting curriculum at the high school. Additionally, we were able to purchase broadcasting equipment for both elementary schools to use in their broadcasting studios. These funds will also be used to provide programs such as a cyber bullying prevention program and a reading intervention program.
- Donated \$4,000 through various teacher mini-grants

The Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is always learning, always improving, and always raising its level of service and professionalism. Presently, we are focusing on reaching the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Enrich the quality of education of the students of Northwestern Lehigh by raising and distributing funds for innovative programs.
- **Goal 2:** Support the educational goals of the Northwestern Lehigh School District.
- **Goal 3:** Encourage creativity among Northwestern Lehigh School District employees by supporting unique growth opportunities and providing resources for creative teaching ideas.

### **We Need YOU!**

As a nonprofit community organization, the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation relies on the donations of individuals and corporations to help us provide the Northwestern Lehigh School District with financial resources to continue to keep vital educational programming in place for our children.

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When parents, educators, community leaders and alumni pulled together to start the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation, our mission wasn't just to reinvigorate education; it was to invest in our community's future vitality.

While our country and our community faces daunting challenges regarding the future of public education, the good news is the interest and impact of educational foundations are growing across the county. Current data indicates there are over 6,000 local educational foundations nationwide. In Pennsylvania, there are 185 identified educational foundations.

At the Northwestern Educational Foundation, we know we have the right people in the right place to make a real difference. We have a team that goes the extra mile, and we know our teachers, parents and children are grateful for that dedication. We are thankful for all the donors and volunteers for whom the Northwestern Lehigh Educational Foundation is a way to live out their call to serve our youngest and most pliable community members.

### **Join the Grass-Roots Movement to Save Our Schools**

*We are witnessing an exhilarating grass-roots phenomenon among those who care about the future of public education in this country. Charitable investments from donors like you make a vital impact on our ability to address today's needs and challenges confronting our community's children.*

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help continue our work by contacting (484) 239-9017 or visiting **[www.nwlef.org](http://www.nwlef.org)**. The need for educational foundations has never been greater. Find out more how your gift will not only make a vital difference to the quality public education of our children, but to Northwestern Lehigh's prosperity and quality of life.