



# EDUCATION UPDATE

from  
**State Senator ANTHONY HARDY WILLIAMS**

Winter 2012-2013

*Always Hard Working . . . for You*

*Dear Friends,*

*As your state senator, I deal with a wide range of issues on your behalf. Promoting economic opportunity, designing a fairer system of taxation, protecting the environment, making our streets safer and defending voting rights, just to name a few. But, hardly a day goes by that I don't think about our shared responsibility to provide a quality education in a safe environment for every child in Pennsylvania. I do believe that we're making progress. I also know that we've got a lot more work to do. Please read in this issue about my efforts to empower students to shun bullying and promote peace in our schools and about my legislative efforts to strengthen our system of public education. And please, let me know of your ideas and concerns.*

*Sincerely,*

**Anthony Hardy Williams**  
PA Senate – 8th District

## EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO SHUN BULLYING AND PROMOTE PEACE

In October of last year, to mark Bullying Prevention Awareness Month in Pennsylvania, I wrote to school principals throughout the 8th Senatorial District. I shared my year-round commitment to eliminating the blight of bullying and to healing the emotional and physical wounds of student-on-student violence and intimidation. I invited school officials to call my office for assistance.

Since that time, my staff and I have delivered materials, including bookmarks and posters, to students throughout the district. Each carries an empowering age-appropriate message to help guide our youth toward building a more peaceful school community.

In my letter, I shared my experiences at three local schools and offered to replicate these successes, made possible through collaboration with local anti-violence advocates, medical experts and sports and entertainment personalities. Charter school students in South Philadelphia received an impactful anti-bullying message at assembly. High school students in a Delaware County public school produced public service videos with anti-bullying themes, which have been aired on Mind TV. Elementary school students in Southwest Philadelphia created anti-bullying posters, which grace their halls and classrooms. You can see the videos and posters on my website at [www.SenatorAnthonyHWilliams.com](http://www.SenatorAnthonyHWilliams.com).

Finally, I shared my support for legislation that would create the Antibullying Bill of Rights, intended to strengthen standards and procedures employed by schools for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying of students that occur both on and off school grounds.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you my involvement in this important issue. If you believe that these offerings would be of value to your school community, encourage your school principal to contact me.





# Harrisburg Happenings

Legislative Update on:

**Strengthening public education • Increasing accountability • Expanding parental choice**

January 1, 2013, being the first Tuesday of the year, marked the beginning of a new two-year session of the state legislature. In this new session, I am introducing and, in some cases, re-introducing legislation intended to strengthen our system of public education, increase accountability and expand parental choice.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

To require schools, public or private, to administer academic assessments to all Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) students in their schools. This serves as both an accountability measure, as well as a method to monitor EITC and OSTC student progress in all schools.

### PARENT ACCOUNTABILITY

To encourage parents to take an active, positive role in the lives and upbringing of their children and hold parents accountable for illegal acts of children if promoted by a parent's action or neglect.

### HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION

To provide for instruction, from grades six through twelve, on the history of the Nazi atrocities committed from 1933 through 1945 and teach that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination.

### CAP ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

To reduce the cap on administrative expenses for Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) organizations from the current 20% to 10% over the next 8 years. The cap was originally set high to allow the organizations to have funding for "start-up" costs. Once established, there is no longer a reason to allow these organizations to spend up to 20% of their funding on administrative and non-program-related costs. Instead, they should be spending almost all of the money on the original purpose of EITC/OSTC — student education.

### STOP EDUCATOR SEXUAL ABUSE, MOLESTATION AND EXPLOITATION (Passing the Trash)

To prevent school employees with a history of sexual misconduct from moving from one school to another, this bill would create a new employment review for certified and non-certified educators and other prospective employees in school entities who have direct contact with children. Upon application for employment with a school entity, the school must require the applicant's current and former employers to disclose whether the applicant has been the subject of an abuse or sexual misconduct investigation by any employer or child protective services agency, has ever resigned from or left employment while such an investigation was pending, or has ever been disciplined, discharged, non-renewed or asked to resign from employment.

*See related story on Page 3*

### PARENT TRIGGER

To require that one of four approved models of reform be instituted at a habitually underperforming school if a majority of parents petition for reform: **1) Turnaround** – the school management is changed replacing the principal, as well as retaining no more than 50 percent of the current staff. The new principal is also given more operational flexibility to ensure the turnaround of the school; **2) Transformation** – similar to the turnaround method, this model replaces the principal and also identifies and rewards school staff members who have increased student achievement; **3) Restart** – the failing school is converted or is closed and then re-opened under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a review process. Any former student who wishes to attend the school must be accepted; **4) School closure** – the low-performing school closes, terminates the staff employment, and sends students to higher achieving schools within the district.

To learn more about Senator Williams' legislative agenda, visit: [www.SenatorAnthonyHWilliams.com](http://www.SenatorAnthonyHWilliams.com)

# YOUR CHILD MAY BE ABLE TO ATTEND A BETTER SCHOOL!

## Williams votes “YES” to expand educational opportunity

**A**s I hope you know, I have been a leader in the fight to expand school choice for families whose children would otherwise be trapped in failing schools. In 2012, we won a battle in that fight with the expansion of the popular and successful Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) program and the creation of the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC).

Both EITC and OSTC offer tax credits to businesses contributing to organizations that provide scholarships. These organizations then award scholarships to eligible children to attend a public school or non-public school of their parents’ choice.



Learn if your child is eligible and how to apply by visiting these websites: [www.newpa.com/eitc](http://www.newpa.com/eitc) and [www.newpa.com/ostc](http://www.newpa.com/ostc) or call my office at 215-492-2980 for assistance.

## PASSING THE TRASH

**I**t’s been called “passing the trash”, the “lemon dance” and the “turkey trot” – allowing bad teachers to move from one school to another. When applied to sexual predators, no matter what you call it, it’s a tragic escape from our responsibility to our children. And it has to stop.

In this context, these terms refer to the all too common practice of allowing school employees to avoid investigation and prosecution for alleged acts of sexual abuse, misconduct and exploitation against students.

School officials and administrators choose to avoid the unpleasantness of an investigation, the threat of litigation, the cost of prosecution and the embarrassment of public disclosure by simply allowing teachers and others to

leave quietly. Sometimes the “deal” includes an agreement not to speak ill of the offender when asked for a reference by another school or district to which the individual has applied for employment.

This dance allows the school to “pass the trash” onto another school where the offender is free to prey on an unsuspecting student body. This hurts our children – many for life.

Instead of making lemonade from the 'lemon dance,' we need to do what we always do with rotten fruit - throw it away. We don't need to pass this trash any longer. Not when our children's safety is at stake. That is why I have offered legislation to Stop Educator Sexual Abuse, Misconduct and Exploitation (SESAME).

## PARENT TRIGGER



Senator Williams (left) and Pastor Marshall Mitchell at a recent screening of the movie "Won't Back Down". The film shows parents and teachers working together to transform a struggling public school. About 200 parents, grandparents and students attended and participated in a follow-up discussion monitored by the senator.

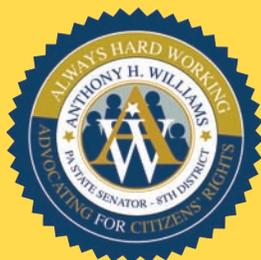


STATE SENATOR  
**Anthony H. Williams**

Senate Box 203008  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3008

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
HARRISBURG, PA  
PERMIT NO. 603

Printed on recycled paper



State Senator  
**ANTHONY H. WILLIAMS**

ADVOCATING FOR CITIZENS' RIGHTS

**AT YOUR SERVICE**

**We're Here To Help!**

**MAIN DISTRICT OFFICE**

2901 Island Avenue • Suite 100 • Philadelphia, PA 19142  
(215) 492-2980 • Fax: (215) 492-2990

**SOUTH PHILADELPHIA OFFICE**

2103 Snyder Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19145  
(215) 755-9185 • Fax: (215) 952-3375

**DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICE**

419 Church Lane • Yeadon, PA 19050  
(610) 284-7335 • Fax: (610) 284-5955

**HARRISBURG OFFICE**

Senate Box 203008 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-3008  
(717) 787-5970 • Fax: (717) 772-0574



[www.senatoranthonywilliams.com](http://www.senatoranthonywilliams.com)

**Services Provided**

**STATE APPLICATIONS:** Vehicle registration • Driver's license • Car plates & placards for the physically challenged  
Special tags • Titles • Higher education financial assistance • Birth certificates

**SENIOR CITIZEN'S APPLICATIONS:** PACE • Property tax and rent rebates • STATE CAPITOL GROUP TOURS

**SOLVING STATE PROBLEMS:** State income taxes • State lottery • Consumer protection • PennDOT  
Unemployment compensation • Any state agencies that serve the public • Utilities or PUC