

**Resolution Supporting House Bill 2124**  
**Necessary Reform of the Process for State Reimbursement of**  
**School Construction and Renovation Projects**  
**By the Board of Directors of the Northern Lehigh School District**

**WHEREAS**, school districts have a duty to provide their students with suitable facilities that are properly constructed, furnished, equipped, and maintained in order to meet the educational and safety needs of students and staff; and many school districts have undertaken construction or renovation projects because of enrollment or safety needs that cannot be ignored; and

**WHEREAS**, the construction, renovation, and repair of school facilities is an extensive and costly undertaking for school districts; and

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the importance of providing appropriate school facilities, to help school districts pay for a portion of the costs of school construction and renovation, the Department of Education (PDE) developed the Planning and Construction Workbook (PlanCon), a process through which Pennsylvania reimburses school districts for a share of approved construction costs; and

**WHEREAS**, the PlanCon process is overly cumbersome for school districts, requiring PDE approval at 11 separate steps as a district proceeds with a project; further, the process is full of antiquated requirements that have created challenges that have escalated over a period of years since it was first developed in the 1970's; and

**WHEREAS**, the state has been unable to meet its financial obligations to school districts for construction and renovation projects and there remains a significant backlog of projects in the PlanCon pipeline with a significant delay in reimbursement, creating financial hardship for school districts. Further, school districts are unaware of where their projects are in the reimbursement schedule because the waiting list has not been made public; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 2124, introduced by Rep. Seth Grove, amends the Public School Code to provide for a more modern, simplified, transparent and financially sustainable process of reimbursement; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 2124 is a significant step in solving an overly-complicated problem that is costing school districts, and local taxpayers, millions of dollars. House Bill 2124, along with an additional appropriation of state money will begin to address the backlog of school district construction projects awaiting reimbursement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northern Lehigh School District, upon recommendations from a feasibility study, began a project in October 2009 to renovate an elementary school and the addition of an administration building to address the issues of an open concept education building, school safety and a failing HVAC system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northern Lehigh School District submitted a Part H application on March 14, 2011 and has completed construction; and

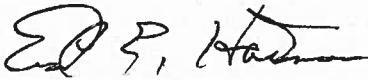
**WHEREAS**, a significant delay in receiving the state reimbursement at Part H of the PlanCon process will force the Northern Lehigh School District to increase taxes and cut programs and services; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northern Lehigh School Board urges the General Assembly to pass and the Governor of Pennsylvania to enact House Bill 2124 that would reform and modernize the state reimbursement process to increase the efficiency and transparency of the program for the school districts and their taxpayers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be posted on the district's website and submitted to the Governor of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, as well as to the elected state senators and representatives of the Northern Lehigh School District in the General Assembly.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2014

Signed,



School Board President



Board Secretary

(seal)