

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

While PA Senate Republicans refuse to break from their summer vacation to return to Harrisburg to formally wrap up this year's state budget - a budget proposed by the Senate that has already passed, requiring only a signature to be sent to Governor Shapiro's desk - the clock is ticking for school districts that will be relying on state funds for the upcoming school year.

BECAUSE OF THIS DELAY, THE BUDGET IS NOW WEEKS LATE AND COUNTING.

If the budget isn't formally signed soon, many districts will need to make decisions about how to deal with the impacts of the Senate delay on their own 2023-24 school year budgets. That uncertainty could mean:

- cuts to district programs or services
- delays in payments to local small businesses that school districts contract with for services and supplies

That's especially true for districts with low reserves to fall back on (ironic, since the same Senate Republicans and their allies have spent years hammering school districts for holding rainy-day fund balances to protect themselves for moments just like this)

The Senate Republicans are dragging their feet primarily over their strong desire to create a new school voucher program to benefit unaccountable private schools.

Democrats in the state House and its leadership team deserve credit for stopping an attempt to ram through this giveaway to private schools that would undermine our public schools rather than strengthen them. Democrats in the state Senate who stood strong for the 1.7 million Pennsylvania public school students deserve credit, as well. We will continue to fight alongside the elected leaders who support quality public education against voucher programs that siphon taxpayer dollars away from our underfunded public schools.

We are pleased Governor Shapiro made the right choice by committing to veto the new private school voucher program, recognizing that a prolonged budget impasse doesn't benefit anyone.

It's time for Senate Republicans to take a break from their summer vacation, come back to Harrisburg, and send the final state budget - their state budget - to Governor Shapiro for signature.