

The Herald-Mail

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Gov. Ed Rendell proposed closing Scotland School for Veterans Children during his budget address in February. (Credit: File photo / )

07/14/2009

## Proposed budget restores funding to Scotland School

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WAYNESBORO, PA. — “All of these obituaries written about Scotland School for Veterans’ Children — this shows how premature they were.”

State Rep. Rob Kauffman’s words Tuesday came less than 24 hours after the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Appropriations Committee put forward a budget plan that restores state funding for the school north of Chambersburg, Pa.

Earlier this year, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell proposed closing the 114-year-old boarding school to eliminate its \$10.5 million-a-year cost to the state. The rest of the school’s \$13.5 million budget comes from federal funds and the students’ “home” school districts.

On Monday, the 13th day after a missed budget deadline, Appropriations Committee Chairman Dwight Evans, D-Philadelphia, released an amendment to Rendell’s budget. That amendment included \$7 million of general fund money and \$3.5 million in stimulus money for the school, and it was successfully voted out of his committee.

“It shows that Scotland School still is on the radar screen for budget negotiations,” said Kauffman, R-Franklin/Cumberland.

Conversations about Scotland School have died down after the initial uproar, according to state Sen. Richard Alloway, R-Franklin/Adams/York. He said he’s heard little about the school in the state capital recently.

Still, that doesn’t mean the school’s doors are permanently shut.

“It’s still in play,” Alloway said. “There’s still nothing decided up here.”

Kauffman and Alloway criticized this week’s main budget plan, which slashes higher-education funding. Alloway said the proposal doesn’t explain how the gap between anticipated revenue and expenditures would be closed.

“The bill is a farce,” Alloway said.

“The whole bill is bad, but (Scotland School funding) is a positive aspect,” Kauffman said.

The House Appropriations Committee actually OK’d two spending plans Monday. The second was the 10-week-old Senate Bill 850 with no funding for Scotland School, but it came with a “negative recommendation”

asking the full House to vote against it.

Alloway said he's heard House rules could be waived to allow a vote on either plan approved by the Appropriations Committee as early as Friday.

But Kauffman cautioned it could still be several weeks until a final budget vote.

Friday will be the first payday on which 77,000 state workers will get diminished checks due to the budget impasse. The legislators have not received pay since July 1.

Kauffman called the president of the Scotland School for Veterans' Children Foundation on Monday evening, then met with a few supporters Tuesday.

"They're encouraged," he said.

Children enrolled at Scotland School must be related to someone with military service. There were 263 students and 191 employees there at the end of the school year.

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