



THE CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR EDUCATION FUNDING

Because every child deserves a chance to succeed.

TOP 10 REASONS PA NEEDS A BETTER BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING SYSTEM

1. Pennsylvania's system for funding public schools is broken.

The current system fails to provide enough resources to educate all students to academic standards, and produces racial disparities and a wide gap between the wealthiest and poorest schools.

2. We are 1 of only 3 states without a basic education funding formula to distribute adequate resources both fairly and predictably.

Research on school finance reform in other states found that sustained, long-term increases in per-pupil spending led to increases in educational attainment and the likelihood that poor children graduate from high school, which in turn increased future family income.

3. The current system does not fairly distribute dollars to cover the costs of educating students with different needs and additional barriers.

It is widely recognized that some children, such as those living in poverty or learning English, require more support to overcome challenges and meet academic standards.

4. Pennsylvania has the widest funding gap between wealthy and poor school districts of any state in the country.

Per-pupil spending in Pennsylvania's poorest districts is 33% less than in its wealthiest districts.

[NCES 2015]

5. The PASA-PASBO Report on School District Budgets shows that in order to balance 2015-16 budgets:

- 70% of districts plan to raise local property taxes, and nearly 80% of those indicate that the increases will hit or exceed the Act 1 index.
- 41% of districts will reduce staffing.
- Nearly one-quarter of all districts, and 29% of the poorest districts, will reduce or eliminate valuable programs.

[PASA-PASBO Report, June 2015]

6. Money does matter. Student performance has tracked funding level changes in Pennsylvania.

A 2011 Education Law Center study found that as state education funding increased by 40% from 2003 to 2010, test scores in the lowest-achieving districts increased by 50% [Education Law Center, 2011]. Conversely, as state funding was cut since 2011 and our system grew more inequitable without a formula, state test scores dropped and the achievement gap did not close.

7. Basic Education funding is so unpredictable from year to year that school districts cannot effectively budget or plan.

Right now, there is no formula, so as we try to develop budgets at a local level, we can only guess at the level of funding we may or may not receive. How do you map out a spending plan for resources to align to a changing curriculum when you don't know with any certainty what your funding will be from one year to the next?

[James Estep May 2015 Letter to the Editor. Their View: Rural districts need fair spending formula. *Centre Daily Times*]

8. Pennsylvanians want the state to increase its support for public schools.

- Increasing state funding for public education is the top priority among Pennsylvania voters [March 2015 Franklin & Marshall College poll].
- Pennsylvanians support increased funding for public schools by a margin of more than 3 to 1 [January 2015 Mercyhurst Center for Applied Politics poll].

9. Pennsylvanians want the state to create a new funding formula for public schools.

- 80% of Pennsylvania voters support a school funding formula that ensures students in every school district have equal access to educational programs and opportunities regardless of the wealth or poverty of the people who live in the district.
- 64% believe that schools with more students who live in poverty should receive more state funding to educate those children, while only about 29% did not agree with that approach.

[Results from questions commissioned by the Campaign for Fair Education Funding in an April 2015 Terry Madonna Opinion Research Survey]

10. Without a funding formula, ALL students will suffer: rural, city, suburban and small town.

The right proposal for students and Pennsylvania will ensure that sufficient funds are provided while addressing income, racial and other disparities so that all children receive an opportunity for a quality education no matter where they live.

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