

Education Funding in Pennsylvania

Did you know....

- State contributions to school district funding averages about 36% with local taxes providing about 57%. The remainder (7%) is federal funding. Average of state funding nationwide is 48%! (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2011)
- Most local funding comes from property taxes, creating great inequality in school district resources (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2012).
- Pennsylvania ranks in the bottom 10 among the 50 states on the share of K-12 costs paid for by state government (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2011).

In the 2010-2011 school year....

- K-12 schools lost approximately \$960,000,000 in state funds with less affluent districts the hardest hit.
- School districts increased class sizes, reduced the number of electives, decreased tutoring, eliminated summer school, delayed the purchase of new textbooks and technology, reduced or eliminated student field trips, established (or increased) fees for participation in extracurricular activities, reduced or eliminated extracurricular activities; and increased fees charged to community groups to use school facilities. In the next two years, several districts are planning to close some neighborhood schools (PASBO & PASA Survey, 2012).

The Governor's proposed 2012-2013 budget....

- Would give K-12 districts almost \$352 million LESS than they received in 2008-2009.
- Would cut reimbursement for charter school expenses and educational assistance (tutoring) programs.
- Would eliminate the \$100 million Accountability Block Grant which many districts use for early childhood programs.
- Would combine the Basic Education Subsidy with transportation costs and Social Security for employees, disadvantaging school districts with higher transportation costs in the future.
- Would "flat fund" special education for the fifth straight year, with no recognition that these costs have increased.
- Would not address the problems of the school districts (such as Chester Upland) that are facing fiscal distress.

Senate Bill 1466, passed on May 9, 2012, by the Senate (still to be considered in the PA House of Representatives)

- Rejected the Governor's plan to combine the Basic Education Subsidy (the state's contribution to districts) with transportation costs and Social Security payments
- Added \$50 million to the Basic Subsidy line item with the intent that these funds would be distributed to "distressed districts"
- Restored \$50 million to the Accountability Block Grant (often used for early childhood education programs)
- Still falls far short of restoring the cuts made in 2011-2012 and less than school districts received in 2008-2009!

For Further Information

The following websites have additional information about Pennsylvania School Funding and other educational issues:

Pennsylvania Department of Education:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_department_of_education/7237

The Education Law Center <http://www.elc-pa.org>

Education Policy and Leadership Center <http://www.eplc.org>

Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign <http://www.paschoolfunding.org>,

Education Voters of Pennsylvania <http://www.educationvoterspa.org>

Save Pennsylvania's Schools <http://www.savepaschools.org>

Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center <http://www.pennbpc.org>

Public Interest Law Center <http://www.pilcop.org>

Pennsylvania State Education Association, <http://www.psea.org>

Pennsylvania School Boards Association <http://www.psba.org>

Keystone State Education Coalition <http://www.keystonestateeducationcoalition.blogspot.com>,

Good Schools Pennsylvania <http://www.goodschoolspa.org>,

Research for Better Schools <http://www.rbs.org>

Keystone Progress <http://www.keystoneprogress.org>

Keystone Research Center <http://www.keystonereseach.org>.

Research for Action <http://www.researchforaction.org>

Information about specific education bills under consideration can be found online. Go to <http://www.house.state.pa.us/index.cfm> and enter the bill number at the top of the page (e.g. SB1). If you do not know the number of the bill, you can search by Keyword (e.g. charters).

Sometimes your state senator or representative will have explanations of bills they sponsor on their websites. Go to <http://www.house.state.pa.us> and search for your legislator. His/her page will give contact information, committee membership, and a website link.