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PA LAWMAKERS PASS \$100 MILLION LEVEL UP FUNDING SUPPLEMENT

100 poorest school districts to receive equity supplement in 2021-22 budget

HARRISBURG (June 25, 2021) – As part of the 2021-22 budget agreement, lawmakers agreed to target a \$100 million equity supplement to the state’s 100 lowest wealth school districts. The measure is based on the Level Up coalition’s proposal, the basis for HB 1167 introduced by Representative Michael Schlossberg in April 2021. Members of the Level Up coalition issued the following statement:

“The Level Up equity supplement is a bright spot in this year’s underwhelming budget agreement – a small, but meaningful step in the right direction. It will accelerate funding to some of Pennsylvania’s most underserved students, for whom profoundly inadequate resources remain the norm.”

“The wealthiest school districts in PA spend, on average, \$4,800 more per student than the poorest, and that gap has grown steadily wider. This money will help the poorest school districts begin to Level Up, inching them closer to their wealthier peers, but is not permanent. There is no guarantee that the Level Up funding tool will be utilized in future budgets to decrease funding disparities and is relatively small compared to the gaping inequity that currently exists in PA school funding.”

“We’ll continue to work together, alongside hundreds of superintendents, educators, taxpayers, and students who stood up for Level Up.”

Due to chronic underfunding at the state level, school districts across Pennsylvania must rely on local wealth – property taxes – to fund their schools. Communities with a robust local tax base can

raise sufficient funding to meet students' needs, while students living in poor districts go without essential resources, even despite high property tax efforts.

The Level Up coalition is committed to addressing the large gap between the resources schools have and what they need. The growing disparity among Pennsylvania's wealthy and poor districts creates enormous inequity, leaving an entire generation of children in poor districts ill-prepared for the challenges and demands of tomorrow impacting local future workforce, tax base, and the state's economy.

The partner organizations comprising the Level Up coalition include ACLAMO, CASA, Education Law Center, Education Rights Network, Education Voters PA, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, Make the Road Pennsylvania, One Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, Public Citizens for Children and Youth, Public Interest Law Center, Teach Plus Pennsylvania, and the Urban League of Philadelphia.

For more information and a full list of the 100 Level Up school districts, please visit leveluppa.org.

The Level Up coalition believes that every child in Pennsylvania deserves robust course choices, class sizes that allow for personalized support, enough school counselors and nurses, and a safe learning environment so they can thrive and succeed in school today and live productive, fulfilling lives after graduation.

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