

# LEVEL UP: Accelerating EQUITABLE SCHOOL FUNDING IN PENNSYLVANIA

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Every child in Pennsylvania has the potential to one day become an outstanding leader in their field, but we don't provide students in every community with the support they need to reach their goals. To see that potential realized, we need to provide Pennsylvania's children with a high-quality education today regardless of where they live.

Every student deserves robust course choices, class sizes that allow teachers to provide them with the help they need, enough school counselors and nurses to provide mental and physical health services, and a safe, healthy learning environment so they can thrive and succeed in school today and live productive, fulfilling lives after graduation. Ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education is an investment in our students' learning today and in our state's prosperity tomorrow.

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## The Problem?

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Pennsylvania ranks 45th in the nation for state share of funding for K-12 education. When the state share of funding is low, communities 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. **Other communities simply cannot raise enough money at the local level**, even with a very high local tax effort.

Pennsylvania's Basic Education Funding formula does direct more dollars to districts with higher levels of need. But only a small percentage of education spending is distributed using the formula. Students in districts with the greatest needs are deeply **shortchanged**. It's not a level playing field.

# The Result

Thousands of students must attend schools that lack the resources needed to ensure that they can succeed. Pennsylvania has one of the most inequitable school funding systems in America. The wealthiest school districts spend, on average, \$4,800 more per student than the poorest, and that gap has grown steadily wider.

This large gap between the resources schools have and what they need leaves an entire generation of children at risk of not being prepared for the challenges and demands of tomorrow, which impacts our state's future workforce, tax base, and economy.

The most underfunded districts serve a disproportionate share of the Commonwealth's students of color, students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English learners.

At the current rate of increases in state educational spending, it will take decades or more for the most underfunded districts to reach adequate funding. For too long, many of our legislators have failed to address this. Our children cannot wait.

## Creating OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Where you live, the color of your skin, or how much money your family has should not prevent you from receiving a high-quality education. But many students are faced with that exact experience. The state must help low-wealth districts close those opportunity gaps.

*It's past time for all of us to come together to ensure our students' access to quality education opportunities. All of us will benefit when every student has access to the robust educational experiences and supports that they need in order to thrive. Let's level up school funding for our most underfunded schools and give every student in Pennsylvania a chance for success.*