



# PA Schools Work Calls for a 2022-23 Education Budget that Prioritizes Adequacy and Equity

## Our Vision

A strong and equitable education system is foundational for a thriving economy, democracy, and society. Every child in Pennsylvania, regardless of race, place, or income, deserves to attend a school with caring and talented educators, safe and adequate facilities, high-quality and up-to-date instructional materials, rigorous course offerings, and extracurricular activities. We envision a statewide school funding system that ensures every school and every student in Pennsylvania has the resources they need to succeed.

## The Problem

Pennsylvania's school funding system is underfunded by over \$4.6 billion, despite high local tax efforts, and 86% of all districts are underfunded according to the state's own adequacy formula. This gap grows larger every year, as mandated costs such as special education and charter school reimbursements increase at a much higher rate than state funding increases. Local school districts are forced to make increasingly draconian cuts or raise property taxes to untenable levels to balance their budgets, and students and taxpayers are the ones who suffer.

While nearly all districts are underfunded, not all suffer equally. The districts farthest from adequacy serve a disproportionate share of the state's students of color, students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English learners. While Pennsylvania's Basic Education Formula provides weighted student funding for districts with higher levels of need, only new education spending is distributed using the formula. 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 through increases in new Basic Education Funding spending; the increases are too small and spread across too many districts to close the gap.

These large adequacy and equity gaps prevent districts from meeting the needs of hundreds of thousands of our most underserved students, limiting their educational opportunities and threatening the Commonwealth's future workforce, tax base, and economy.



## The Solution

With a long-term goal of fully closing the \$4.6 billion adequacy gap, and recognizing that federal resources are available to help defray costs, we call for a **historic increase of \$1.525 billion in K-12 education funding for the 2022-23 fiscal year**. This funding should be allocated in the following way:

- \$1 billion to all 500 school districts through the Basic Education Formula
- \$200 million to all 500 school districts through the Special Education Formula
- \$300 million to the 100 most underfunded school districts through Level Up
- \$25 million in Career and Technical Education funding

An investment of this size will demonstrate the value the Commonwealth places on its students and schools and will be a critical first step toward addressing the magnitude of the total statewide adequacy shortfall. And an investment in Level Up will begin to address the urgent needs of the most severely underfunded districts alongside the needs of all 500 districts.

## Why this Distribution?

The proposal outlined in this document effectively addresses adequacy and equity. It provides significant recurring revenue to all school districts to begin to close adequacy gaps and reduces racial and socioeconomic inequities by more precisely targeting the students with the highest needs. It avoids the volatility and uncertainty of proposals that redistribute all funds through the formula, benefits more districts overall, and eliminates the possibility of substantial cuts to some districts and students. To achieve adequacy and eliminate longstanding inequities in school funding, the state must invest a significant amount of additional, recurring funding into our public schools, beginning with a \$1.525 billion increase this year.

Read the full analysis from the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center [here](#).

