

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF HOW OUR BROKEN STATE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM AFFECTS PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS



“Dear Pennsylvania lawmakers: My teacher taught me to believe in myself. She taught me to believe in kindness, fairness and equality. What do you believe in?”

- Cassandra

In a recent op-ed published in the Scranton Times-Tribune, Laura Perry Sosik, a second-grade teacher in the Scranton School District, wrote about the tangible impacts of underfunding in her classroom.

A recent analysis of funding and adequacy gaps in Pennsylvania School Districts found that the Scranton School District is underfunded by more than \$4,000 per student annually.

As outlined in the article, due to budget shortfalls the Scranton School District:

- no longer has a pre-K program.
- has closed many of their school libraries and made dramatic cuts to their music programs.
- has cut school counselor positions, to the point that the 900 students at Laura’s elementary school have access to only one guidance counselor, despite the American School Counselors Association’s recommendation of one counselor for every 250 students.
- has been forced to close buildings due to irreparable conditions and has redistributed students to neighboring schools, increasing class sizes and overcrowding schools.

Laura’s own students told heartbreaking stories about their own inadequate experience as public-school students in Scranton:

Dear Pennsylvania lawmakers:

I am 7 years old. I’ve never been inside a library. Our school library closed because we don’t have enough money. Sometimes I pick a book from a cart. Can we have money for our library?

- Alexa

Dear Pennsylvania lawmakers:

I work very hard and always try my best. I love to learn. Don’t I deserve the same opportunities as other students in Pennsylvania?

- Cecelia

Lawmakers in Harrisburg have the ability this year to make a bold investment in our kids, which would be an important down payment on what we owe Pennsylvania students.

CLOSE PENNSYLVANIA’S **\$4.6B** PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING GAP

Property taxes are rising, and public schools are struggling.

A major down payment in the FY 2022-23 budget is an urgent necessity.