

WHAT DOES OUR BROKEN STATE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM MEAN FOR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES?



“Sitting in desks that I didn't fit in, sitting in desks that were broken, trying to read textbooks that you went from page 19 to page 27. Eating food with roaches, changing for gym with roaches, going to football practice with roaches. Pretty much going to school with roaches.”

-P. Michael Horvath, 2019 graduate of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District

With months before the historic PA school funding lawsuit comes to a close, the testimony from petitioner school districts like the Wilkes-Barre Area School District is still resonating. Think about Wilkes-Barre School District where instructional costs have gone up by over \$9 million in a decade - nearly double what state funding covered, and special education costs jumped over \$11 million (state funding only increased by \$1 million during that time).

Brian Costello, superintendent of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District gave us a lot to talk about during his testimony:

- In 2016, the district was forced to make “completely draconian” cuts - eliminated all K-8 art classes and all librarian positions; furloughed 37 teachers and two dozen paraprofessionals. (Art classes and librarians have not been restored.)
- Last year, the district consolidated three schools and cut 37 more teaching positions.
- 80% of students are poor, ranking it 16th out of 499 PA school districts. Its current spending, adjusted for student need, ranks 488th, but the district continues to fall behind because of lack of state funding.
- The district lacks many of the necessary resources needed to support educators and students: intervention specialists, staff for small group learning, enough teachers, guidance counselors, and more.

The state has the money to make an investment in 2022-23 to change outcomes for PA public schools. Think about your high school memories, the glory days gone by. What will these kids be talking about when they look back on their school days?

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.