

The Future of School Funding in Pennsylvania:

How the BEF Commission can shape it



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Bringing The System Into Compliance

Low-Wealth Districts Cannot Provide the Resources Students Need

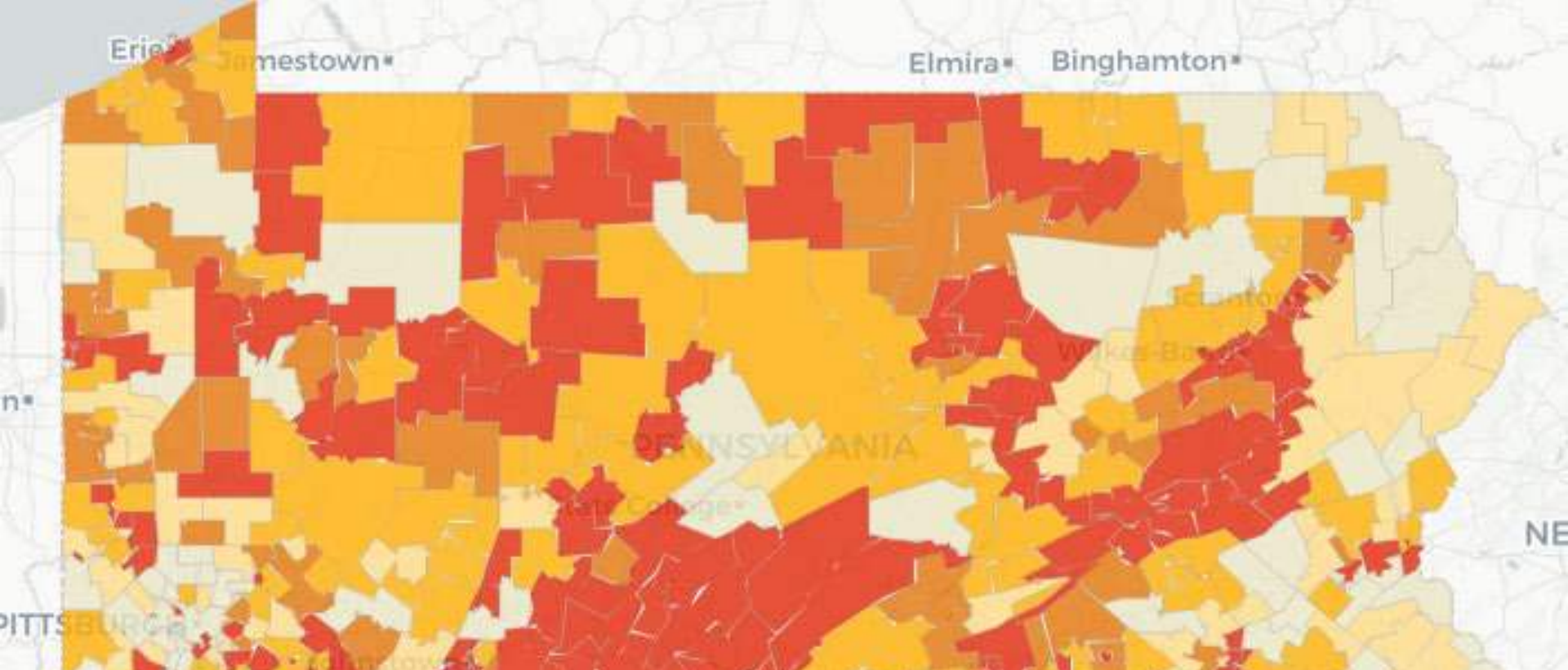
The evidence demonstrates that low-wealth districts like Petitioner Districts, which struggle to raise enough revenue through local taxes to cover the greater needs of their students, lack the inputs that are essential elements of a thorough and efficient system of public education – adequate funding; courses, curricula, and other programs that prepare students to be college and career ready; sufficient, qualified, and effective staff; safe and adequate facilities; and modern, quality instrumentalities of learning.

Cause and Effect

Based upon the evidence presented, it is evident to the Court that the current system of funding public education has disproportionately, negatively impacted students who attend schools in low-wealth school districts. This disparity is the result of a funding system that is heavily dependent on local tax revenue, which benefits students in high-wealth districts. (FOF ¶¶ 293, 295, 379.) It is also impacted by a funding formula that does not adequately take into account student needs, which are generally higher in low-wealth districts. (*See, e.g.*, FOF ¶¶ 824, 1702.) As a result, students in low-wealth districts do not have access to the educational resources needed to prepare them to succeed academically, socially, or civically.

The Path to Constitutional Compliance

1. Evaluate all major funding needs: basic education, special education, facilities, CTE, and Pre-K
2. Develop a formula to determine how much each school district needs to provide a constitutionally compliant system
3. In 2024-25, enact legislation to meet these adequacy targets in short order, and in every year thereafter



Measuring adequate funding



Measuring Success

[Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) > [K-12](#) > [ESSA](#) > [ESSA Report Card](#) > Goals and Interim Targets

Goals and Interim Targets

Pennsylvania's proposed long-term goals apply to all public schools and to each student subgroup.

Pennsylvania aims to reduce, by half, the statewide percentage of non-proficient students on state assessments by the end of the 2032-33 school year. This timeline will allow academic planning and programming to support a cohort of students across the full span of their public education experience, from kindergarten through grade 12.

PDE: Achievable Goals

4 Q. Do you believe these goals are
5 achievable?

6 A. I do.

8 THE WITNESS: Can I make a -- I just
9 want to answer one of your questions with a
10 little bit more nuance.

11 When you ask if the goals are
12 achievable, yes, the goals are achievable; but we
13 would make the claim that more resources are
14 needed for school districts to achieve those
15 goals. So the goals are achievable, but it's
16 -- the department would make claim that more
17 resources are going to be needed to achieve those
18 goals.

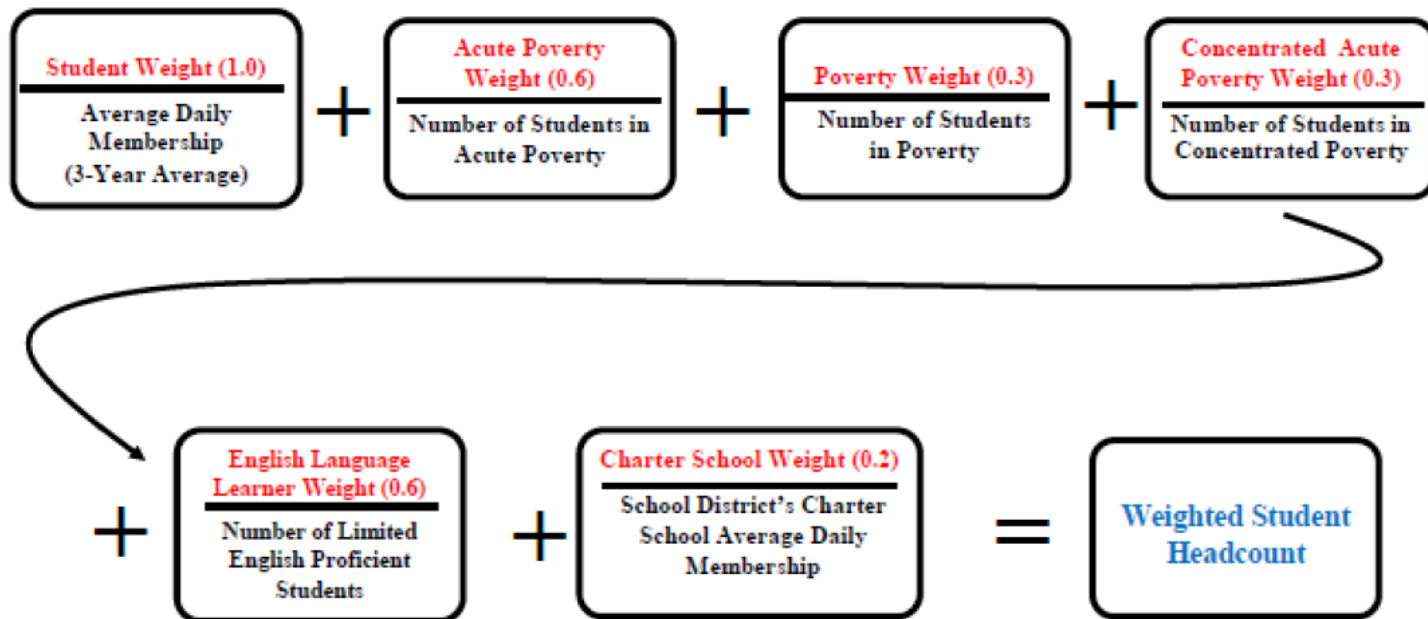
The operating costs of a district

Current Expenditures

- Line 1000 (instruction, i.e., teachers)
- Line 2000 (support, i.e., counselors and principals)
- Line 3000 (non-instruction, i.e., sports and extracurricular activities)
- ~~Lines 4000-5000 (facilities)~~

Need Based on State Weights

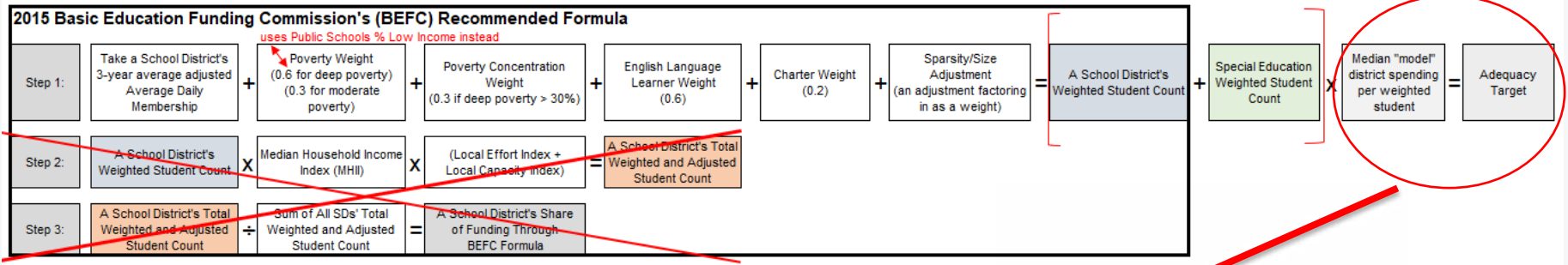
Weighted Basic Education Student Headcount Equation



Need Based on State Weights

Reccomended Weighting Factors			
Category	Average Cost	Weight	
Regular Education	\$ 7,140		
Category 1	\$ 11,677	1.64	
Category 2	\$ 35,920	3.08	
Category 3	\$ 74,031	6.34	

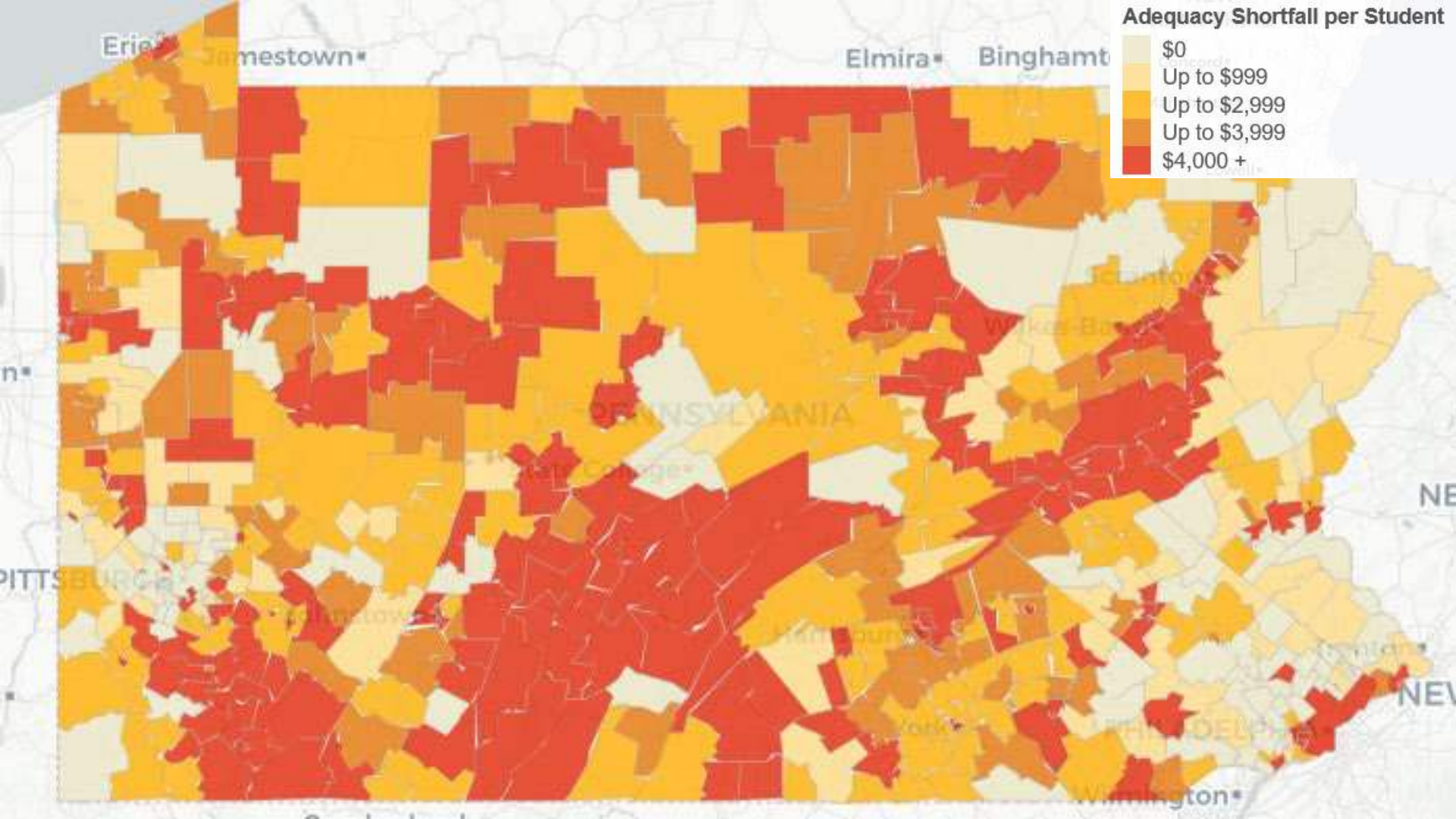
The Formula



$$\text{Median "model" district spending per weighted student} = \text{Adequacy Target}$$

Aggregate shortfall: \$6.2 billion

Adequacy Shortfall per Student



Principles for a funding solution

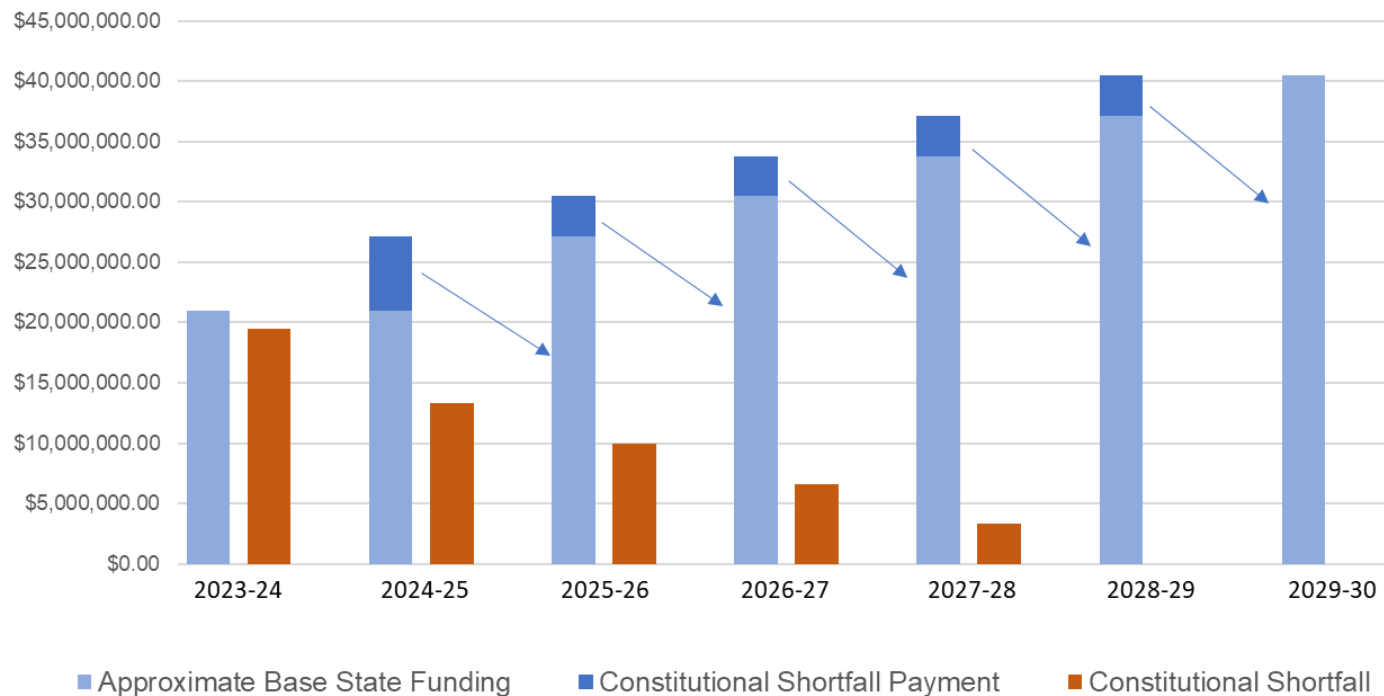
- Permanently fill long-standing adequacy gaps in a timely way
- Robust state share – no increased tax effort in low wealth districts
- Equitably distributed – fund those farthest from adequacy
- Build on existing formulas for BEF/SEF
- No redistribution of existing BEF funds

Constitutional shortfall funding

School District	County	Adequacy Shortfall Per ADM	Total Adequacy Shortfall	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Greater Johnstown SD	Cambria	\$ 10,539	\$ 32,156,631	\$10,276,248	\$ 5,470,096	\$ 5,470,096	\$ 5,470,096	\$ 5,470,096
Wilkes-Barre Area SD	Luzerne	\$ 10,470	\$ 88,961,742	\$28,429,374	\$15,133,092	\$15,133,092	\$15,133,092	\$15,133,092
Shenandoah Valley SD	Schuylkill	\$ 10,370	\$ 12,492,033	\$ 3,992,061	\$ 2,124,993	\$ 2,124,993	\$ 2,124,993	\$ 2,124,993
Allentown City SD	Lehigh	\$ 9,674	\$ 203,400,254	\$65,000,323	\$34,599,983	\$34,599,983	\$34,599,983	\$34,599,983
Panther Valley SD	Carbon	\$ 9,417	\$ 19,514,589	\$ 6,236,249	\$ 3,319,585	\$ 3,319,585	\$ 3,319,585	\$ 3,319,585
Erie City SD	Erie	\$ 9,337	\$ 115,170,447	\$36,804,852	\$19,591,399	\$19,591,399	\$19,591,399	\$19,591,399
Altoona Area SD	Blair	\$ 8,190	\$ 61,482,565	\$19,647,894	\$10,458,668	\$10,458,668	\$10,458,668	\$10,458,668
McKeesport Area SD	Allegheny	\$ 7,305	\$ 27,691,736	\$ 8,849,408	\$ 4,710,582	\$ 4,710,582	\$ 4,710,582	\$ 4,710,582
Norristown Area SD	Montgomery	\$ 6,917	\$ 58,190,523	\$18,595,861	\$ 9,898,666	\$ 9,898,666	\$ 9,898,666	\$ 9,898,666
William Penn SD	Delaware	\$ 6,805	\$ 38,053,358	\$12,160,656	\$ 6,473,175	\$ 6,473,175	\$ 6,473,175	\$ 6,473,175
Lancaster SD	Lancaster	\$ 4,664	\$ 47,491,350	\$15,176,742	\$ 8,078,652	\$ 8,078,652	\$ 8,078,652	\$ 8,078,652

Constitutional shortfall funding

Panther Valley Funding Example



The Plan for Constitutional School Funding

- Adequacy Number or Distribution formula
- Four or five-year time frame
- Legislative language establishing permanence
- Include pre-K and facilities

Large Amounts of Consensus

In its evaluation, Attorney General argues the Court must consider the inputs, as well as the outputs. (*Id.* at 42, 44.) When the evidence presented is considered, Attorney General asserts the fundamental elements of a thorough and efficient education are not provided. (*Id.*) Among the inadequacies Attorney General identifies are large class sizes, a shortage of certified teachers, curricula not aligned with state standards, a lack of advanced educational opportunities, and an inadequate number of counselors, social workers, reading specialists, and tutors, to name a few. (*Id.* at 42-44.) Attorney General claims the effect of these inadequacies is evidenced in the low levels of proficiency on the PSSA and Keystone Exams and lower graduation rates. (*Id.* at 45.)

Make the promise a reality

All witnesses agree that every child can learn. It is now the obligation of the Legislature, Executive Branch, and educators, to make the constitutional promise a reality in this Commonwealth.



RENÉE COHN JUBELIRER, President Judge

THANK YOU