

# FINISH

# the JOB

# Fund Our Schools!

It's time for state lawmakers to do their job and fund our public schools. For too long, many Pennsylvania students have been learning in schools that lack vital resources to succeed. And for too long, many Pennsylvania families have been paying high property taxes to make up for what the state has neglected to spend on public education. Enough is enough.

Pennsylvania's courts declared that our school funding system is unconstitutional because the quality of students' education is determined by their zip code. There is a \$5.1 billion gap between what the state is spending on K-12 public schools now and what students need.

It's time to act. This year lawmakers have a chance to end the underfunding via a proposed \$1.8 billion increase for public schools and a long-term commitment to close the entire funding gap. The proposed education budget is an important first step in delivering a great public education for every child.

## Harrisburg is debating a historic public education budget proposal that is a win for every school district in Pennsylvania:

- ✓ **Basic Education Funding and Special Education Funding:** \$250 million for all 500 school districts
- ✓ **Reducing Cyber Charter Overspending:** \$262 million in savings for all 500 school districts
- ✓ **Adequacy Funding:** \$736 million for the most underfunded districts—371 in every corner of the state  
*The proposal also provides stable funding to all 500 districts while protecting districts that have seen declining enrollment from funding cuts.*
- ✓ **Tax Equity Funding:** \$136 million for the school districts with disproportionately high property taxes
- ✓ **Funds for School Building Repairs:** \$300 million through the School Environmental Repairs program

**This is year one of a seven-year plan to fully and fairly fund our schools.**

## It's time to close the funding gaps.

**With a \$14 billion surplus in Harrisburg, the state can afford to fund this education proposal. Our students cannot wait any longer. It's time for lawmakers to finish the job and fund our schools!**



Learn more about how the 7-year plan impacts your school district at [PASchoolsWork.org/7-Year-Plan](https://PASchoolsWork.org/7-Year-Plan)



Pennsylvania's schools are notoriously underfunded. Fueled by insufficient state funding in a system that relies heavily on local wealth, the students who need the most have had the least because of where they live: small towns, big cities, and suburbs that are not wealthy. Students have been deprived of enough teachers, safe buildings, up-to-date curriculum, and more.

## The Path to Making the Right to Quality Education a Reality in Pennsylvania

**NOV. 2014  
TO  
FEB. 2023**

**A lawsuit held state leaders accountable.** The state wasn't doing its part—so districts and families sued state leaders in 2014. In February of 2023, they won, with the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruling that this funding system violates the state constitution, that students have a fundamental right to education, and that the governor and General Assembly must fully and fairly fund our public schools so that every student can have a meaningful opportunity to succeed. **Officials in Harrisburg did not appeal, so they have to fix the system now.** It is crucial to the future of the commonwealth that they do so.

**JANUARY  
2024**

**Lawmakers developed an innovative plan.** The state responded by convening the Basic Education Funding Commission, a bipartisan panel of legislators and Gov. Shapiro's designees, to develop a long-term plan. A majority of commission members signed on to a simple, but transformative proposal: Rather than a school funding system dependent on local wealth and Harrisburg politics, Pennsylvania should calculate how much funding is needed in every school district and provide the necessary additional funding to all schools. That funding gap – the amount owed to our public schools to reach adequacy – was calculated by the BEFC to be \$5.4 billion, and the Commission recommended a seven-year timeline for the state to completely close that gap.

**FEBRUARY  
2024**

**The governor endorsed the plan.** In his annual budget address, the governor said something all Pennsylvanians should agree on: "No one here should be OK with an unconstitutional education system for our kids." Gov. Shapiro then backed up his commitment to public schools in his 2024-25 budget proposal by putting year one of the long-term plan in motion. With a large budget surplus, the state can easily afford to do this.

**SOON**

**The lives of children will be changed.** If fully implemented, this plan will mean thousands more teachers, counselors, librarians, and school nurses, rigorous curriculum with updated technology. This will deliver what every child in Pennsylvania deserves: the opportunity to thrive.

**The time is now to finish the job: tell your legislators to pass the education budget proposal—and back it up with a long-term commitment to our students to fully close the state's adequacy gaps within seven years.**