

HISTORIC INVESTMENT IN PA PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS ANOTHER STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

"It is an indication of how large the school funding gap has become that this significant investment in state dollars does not come close to what is needed to eliminate Pennsylvania's public school funding gap."

- Donna Cooper, Children First

This month, the General Assembly passed - and Governor Wolf signed - a budget agreement for the coming fiscal year that makes historic investments in public education, including:

- Basic Education Funding: \$750 million increase, including \$225 million in Level Up Funding to the 100 school districts with the greatest need
- Special Education Funding: \$100 million increase
- Career & Technical Education Funding: \$6.1 million increase
- School-Based Mental Health Services: \$100 million
- School Safety and Security: \$100 million

The investment represents a recognition by lawmakers that our schools are not adequately resourced to ensure every child has a chance to reach their full potential. For the first time in recent history, lawmakers approved a funding increase larger than the rise in state-mandated costs for school districts.

While this is another step in the right direction, it's important to note that:

- Significant increases in future years will be required for the state to meet its constitutional requirement to provide for a thorough and efficient public education.
- Pennsylvania is still 43rd in the country when it comes to state share of revenue from the state, which means the burden is passed to local taxpayers through property taxes.
- Despite the investment in the Level Up program for the second year in a row, massive inequities in school funding remain; this particularly harms low-income students and students of color.

Fixing the long-term problems of inadequacy and inequity in the way we fund Pennsylvania public schools will require long-term commitments from legislators and governors. This year's investment in our schools is another step forward on the long road to closing our funding gap. Now, we need to keep going.

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.