Closing School Funding Gaps Across Urban and Rural Pennsylvania

How Adequacy Funding Is Reducing Racial and Economic Inequities by Investing in Students and Communities with the Greatest Need

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Key Findings

- Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court mandated public education adequacy funding formula is working as intended. The largest new state investments are being directed to school districts with the greatest remaining funding gaps.
- Districts serving the highest concentrations of low-income students continue to have the largest funding needs, but they are also seeing the greatest reductions in those gaps as adequacy funding is taking effect.
- Districts serving large shares of Black and Hispanic students continue to receive some of the largest adequacy investments, helping reduce longstanding racial disparities in school funding.
- Pennsylvania's school funding inequities are not simply an urban issue. The data show that many low-income, predominantly white rural school districts continue to face substantial funding gaps alongside districts serving large shares of Black and Hispanic students. Both are affected by a funding system that has historically relied too heavily on local wealth rather than student need.
- Pennsylvania has made meaningful progress toward meeting its constitutional obligation to provide every student with a thorough and efficient public education, but billions of dollars in unmet funding needs remain. Continued annual adequacy investments will be necessary to ensure every student, regardless of race, income, or ZIP code, has access to the educational opportunities they deserve.

Introduction

For decades, Pennsylvania's school funding system has produced unequal educational opportunities because too much of the cost of public education has depended on local wealth, or lack thereof, rather than student need. As a result, many students in low-income communities, communities of color, and rural communities have attended schools with fewer resources than students in wealthier parts of the Commonwealth.

In 2023, the Commonwealth Court ruled in *William Penn School District et al. v. Pennsylvania Department of Education* that Pennsylvania's school funding system violated the Pennsylvania Constitution because it failed to provide every student with meaningful access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary public education. That landmark decision required the Commonwealth to begin addressing longstanding funding disparities that left many school districts without the resources needed to adequately educate their students.

In response, Pennsylvania adopted a new approach to school funding based on "adequacy." Rather than distributing new education dollars without regard to need, the Commonwealth now estimates how much funding each school district requires to provide an adequate education and directs additional state resources toward districts with the largest remaining funding gaps. Throughout this report, we refer to these targeted investments as "adequacy funding."

After the Basic Education Funding Commission determined that Pennsylvania's public schools were underfunded by approximately $5.4 billion statewide, lawmakers began making annual investments to close the gap between what school districts need to provide an adequate education and the funding they currently receive from state and local sources.[1] These investments, known as adequacy funding, are being phased over multiple years rather than provided all at once.

The first adequacy-directed payment, enacted in the 2024–25 budget year, provided about $526 million through the Ready to Learn Block Grant, including roughly $494 million for adequacy funding and roughly $32 million for tax equity.[2] The following year, lawmakers added approximately $565 million, including $526.44 million for adequacy funding, $6.437 million for a new minimum adequacy supplement, and $32.202 million for tax equity. The enacted 2026–27 budget maintained the same level and distribution of new funding, adding another $565 million: $526.44 million for adequacy funding, $6.437 million for the minimum adequacy supplement, and $32.202 million for tax equity.[3] Too often, conversations about school funding frame urban and rural communities as competing for limited resources. This analysis shows that is the wrong assumption. Districts serving large shares of Black and Hispanic students and many predominantly white rural districts share the same underlying challenge: they have historically lacked the local wealth needed to generate adequate school funding. These investments have already shown that targeted adequacy funding can help districts address long-standing resource gaps and strengthen the educational supports available to students. In the PA Schools Work June 2026 report, *The Impact of Pennsylvania's Adequacy Supplement*, districts describe using adequacy dollars to support core educational needs, including staffing, student services, academic programming, and other investments that help move schools closer to adequacy.[4] Pennsylvania's largest new education investments are being directed to the districts with the greatest remaining funding gaps, helping reduce longstanding racial and economic disparities in school funding while benefiting both urban communities and many rural, low-wealth school districts across the Commonwealth.

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[1] Brooke Schultz, "Democrats' Education Funding Report Says Pennsylvania Owes $5B More to School Districts," Associated Press, January 11, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/557c40a605d4e0a3ef15515a8d815b90

[2] Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, "2024–25 Enacted General Fund Tracking Run," July 11, 2024. https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/budget/documents/publications-and-reports/commonwealthbudget/past-budgets-to-2021-22/2024-25-budget-documents/enacted%20tracking%20run%207-11-2024.pdf

[3] Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Education Budget," 2026–27 Enacted Budget, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/schools/grants-and-funding/school-finances/education-budget

[4] PA Schools Work, "The Impact of Pennsylvania's Adequacy Supplement," June 2026, https://paschoolswork.org/adequacy-report-june-2026/

This report builds on that evidence and updates the Pennsylvania Policy Center's previous analysis of school funding adequacy using figures from the enacted 2026–27 budget. Last year, we showed that the first and second rounds of adequacy payments had begun to reduce the largest funding gaps, especially in districts serving higher shares of low-income students, Black students, and Hispanic students. This year's update shows that continued adequacy investments are expanding that progress. The districts that began furthest from adequacy remain the districts with the largest remaining gaps, but they are also seeing some of the largest reductions as new state dollars are directed toward the schools and students with the greatest need.

A Brief History

Pennsylvania's current adequacy funding system grew out of a long fight over whether the state was meeting its constitutional obligation to provide every student with access to a "thorough and efficient" system of public education. For decades, Pennsylvania relied heavily on local property taxes to fund schools. That structure allowed wealthier districts to raise more revenue locally, while low-wealth districts often had to tax residents at higher rates and still could not generate enough money to provide comparable educational opportunities. Our 2026 brief, *Who Pays for Pennsylvania Schools?*, highlights exactly this problem: By 2021, Pennsylvania's state share of public education funding had fallen to roughly 35%, compared with about 46% nationally, and Pennsylvania remained at or near the lower end among neighboring states.[5] These longstanding funding patterns help explain why adequacy became central to Pennsylvania's school finance debate: without a stronger state role, students in low-wealth communities remain more dependent on local tax capacity than on actual student need.

In 2014, several school districts, parents, and statewide organizations filed suit against the Commonwealth, arguing that Pennsylvania's school funding system was both inadequate and inequitable. The case, *William Penn School District et al. v. Pennsylvania Department of Education*, took nearly a decade to move through the courts. In 2023, Commonwealth Court ruled that Pennsylvania's school funding system was unconstitutional because it failed to provide all students with meaningful access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary public education. The ruling confirmed what students, families, educators, and advocates had long argued: Pennsylvania's school funding system had allowed large disparities between low-wealth and high-wealth districts to deny many students the educational opportunities guaranteed by the state constitution.

Pennsylvania had already taken some steps toward fairer school funding before the ruling. In 2016, the state adopted a fair funding formula for distributing new Basic Education Funding dollars.[6] That formula was designed to account for student need and district capacity by considering factors such as poverty, English learner status, sparsity, enrollment, and local tax capacity. But the formula applied only to new state dollars, while most existing Basic Education Funding remained locked into historical allocations through the "hold harmless" system. Under this system, districts were generally protected from receiving less state funding than they had received in prior years, even

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[5] Laura Beltrán Figueroa and Castin Stone, "Who Pays for Pennsylvania Schools? How Pennsylvania's School Funding System Relies on Local Wealth and Why State Investment Matters," Pennsylvania Policy Center, June 3, 2026.
https://pennpolicy.org/research_publication/who-pays-for-pennsylvania-schools/

[6] Castin Stone, Laura Beltrán Figueroa, and Marc Stier, "Pennsylvania's Path to Adequately Funded Schools," Pennsylvania Policy Center, 2025, https://pennpolicy.org/research_publication/pas-funded-schools/

when enrollment or student needs changed. As a result, the fair funding formula helped direct new dollars more equitably, but it could not fully correct decades of inequity because the majority of state education funding continued to reflect outdated patterns rather than current student need.

After the court ruling, the Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC) developed a new adequacy framework to estimate what each district would need to provide an adequate education. The Commission's work identified a statewide adequacy gap of roughly $5.4 billion, with most of that responsibility falling to the state. The adequacy framework created a district-by-district measure of the gap between what school districts need to provide students with an adequate education and what they currently receive from state and local sources. The General Assembly's 2024–25 budget marked the first major legislative response to the court ruling and the BEFC process. Lawmakers created a new adequacy supplement within the Ready to Learn Block Grant to begin directing state dollars to districts furthest from adequacy. The 2024–25 budget increased the Ready to Learn Block Grant by about $526 million, including roughly $494 million for adequacy funding and roughly $32 million for tax equity. The adequacy supplement was designed to close a portion of each district's adequacy gap, while the tax equity supplement provided additional support to districts where residents already face especially high local tax burdens. The tax equity supplement is especially important because many underfunded districts have not failed to support their schools locally. In many cases, they already tax themselves heavily but still cannot raise enough revenue because their local tax base is too weak. The tax equity supplement recognizes this problem by directing additional state support to districts that face both inadequate funding and high local tax effort. In other words, it helps distinguish between districts that are underfunded because they choose not to raise local revenue and districts that are underfunded because they lack the local wealth to do so.

The 2025–26 enacted budget continued the phase-in of adequacy-directed funding, increasing the Ready to Learn Block Grant again and building on the first year of adequacy payments. Based on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 2026–27 budget materials, the 2025–26 Ready to Learn appropriation is approximately $1.383 billion, up from $821.5 million in 2024–25. That means the 2025–26 enacted budget added roughly another $562 million in adequacy-directed Ready to Learn funding.[7] While Pennsylvania still has a large remaining adequacy gap, the second year of funding continued the state's movement away from symbolic increases and toward a more systematic phase-in of the resources needed to meet the constitutional standard.

The enacted 2026–27 budget represents the next step in that phase-in. The budget provides $1.948 billion for the Ready to Learn Block Grant, a $565 million increase over the 2025–26 fiscal year appropriation. The enacted increase largely mirrors the FY 2025-26 one, including $526.44 million for an additional adequacy investment, $6.437 million for a minimum adequacy supplement, and $32.202 million for an additional tax equity supplement. The additional adequacy investment continues sending new dollars to districts with remaining adequacy gaps. The minimum adequacy supplement provides another layer of support for K–12 education, while the tax equity supplement continues recognizing districts where local taxpayers are already carrying an unusually heavy burden.

[7] Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Education Budget," 2026–27 Enacted Budget, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/schools/grants-and-funding/school-finances/education-budget

What the Progress Looks Like

As we did in our previous analysis, we begin by dividing Pennsylvania school districts into four groups, or quartiles, based on the share of students who are low-income, Hispanic, or Black. Each quartile contains approximately one-fourth of Pennsylvania's student population, not one-fourth of the state's school districts. As shown in Figure 1, the percentage ranges defining each quartile differ across the three measures because low-income, Hispanic, and Black students are distributed differently across Pennsylvania school districts. Keeping the number of students in each quartile roughly equal creates a more apples-to-apples comparison because the results are less likely to be driven simply by one group representing far more students than another.

Specifically:

For low-income enrollment, districts in the highest quartile are those where 72% to 100% of students qualify as low-income. Districts in the second quartile are those where 42% to 71% of students qualify as low-income. Districts in the third and fourth quartiles are those where 32% to 41% and 4% to 32% of students, respectively, qualify as low-income.

For Hispanic enrollment, districts in the highest quartile are those where 24% to 86% of students are Hispanic. Districts in the second-highest Hispanic quartile are those where 9% to 24% of students are Hispanic. Districts in the second-lowest and lowest quartiles are those where 3% to 9% and 0% to 3% of students, respectively, are Hispanic.

For Black enrollment, districts in the highest quartile are those where 39% to 93% of students are Black. Districts in the second-highest Black student quartile are those where 11% to 39% of students are Black. Districts in the second-lowest and lowest quartiles are those where 6% to 11% and 0.5% to 5% of students, respectively, are Black.

This method allows us to compare groups of students, rather than groups of districts, and to better understand whether state investments are reaching the students who have been most harmed by Pennsylvania's inequitable funding system. It also strengthens the analysis by allowing us to compare funding gaps across similarly sized groups of students while examining each measure consistently. We analyze these three measures separately because each helps reveal a different dimension of Pennsylvania's school funding inequities. Low-income enrollment captures the relationship between student poverty, local tax capacity, and school resources. Hispanic and Black enrollment help show how school funding inequities overlap with racial and ethnic disparities that have long shaped educational opportunity in the Commonwealth.

Figure 1. Student Composition Ranges Used to Define School District Quartiles

How School District Quartiles Are Defined

Each quartile contains approximately one-fourth of Pennsylvania's students

	Lowest Quartile	Second-Lowest Quartile	Second-Highest Quartile	Highest Quartile
Low-Income Students	4%-32%	32%-41%	42%-71%	72%-100%
Hispanic Students	0%-3%	3%-9%	9%-24%	24%-86%
Black Students	0.5%-5%	6%-11%	11%-39%	39%-93%

Source: Pennsylvania Policy Center analysis of Pennsylvania Department of Education budget, enrollment, and demographic data.

Across every analysis in this report, the same pattern emerges. Whether we examine school districts by income enrollment, Hispanic enrollment, or Black enrollment, districts serving students with the greatest need continue to have the largest funding gaps—but they are also receiving the largest adequacy investments. The enacted 2026–27 investments would reduce those gaps most sharply in the districts with the greatest need. That is the central finding of this update: adequacy funding is working as intended by moving the largest new state investments toward the districts furthest from adequate funding.

The analysis also reveals an important lesson about who benefits from these investments. While districts serving the highest shares of Black and Hispanic students continue to face the largest funding gaps, many low-income, predominantly white rural districts also remain substantially underfunded because of their limited local tax capacity. Together, these findings show that Pennsylvania's school funding inequities extend across both urban and rural communities and are driven less by geography than by disparities in local wealth. Adequacy funding begins to address those inequities by directing additional state resources to the students and communities with the greatest need.

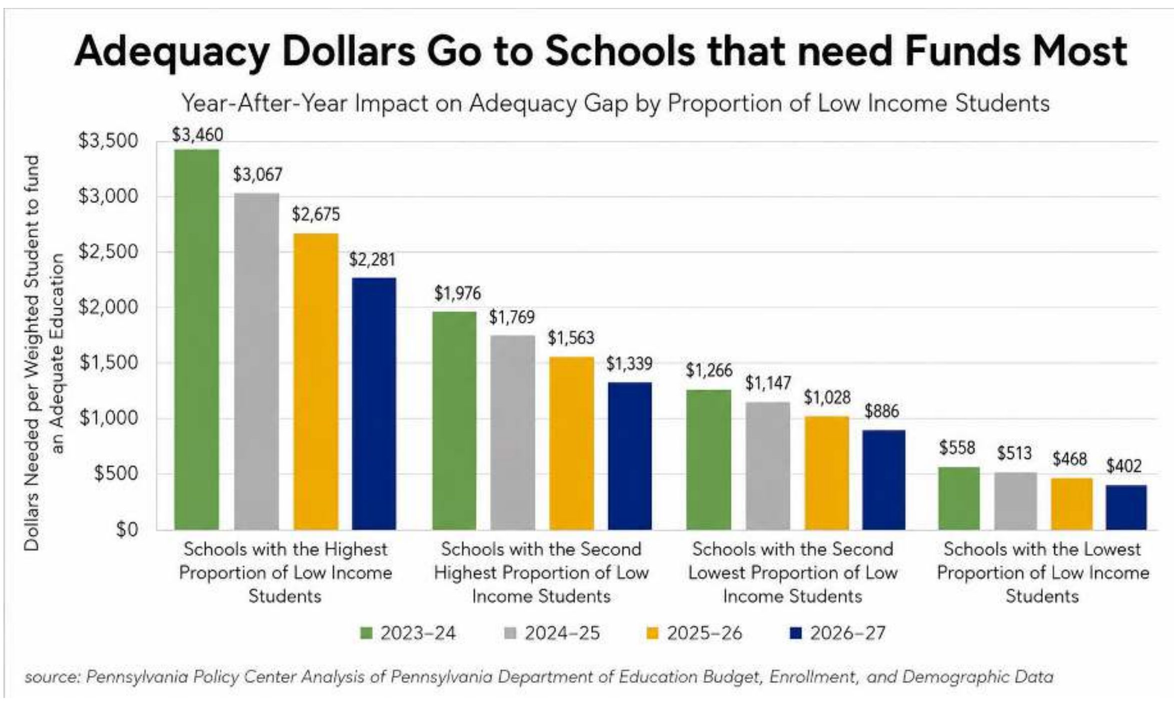
Low-Income Districts Have the Largest Remaining Adequacy Gaps

As shown in Figure 2, when we look at districts by the share of low-income students, the largest remaining adequacy gaps are in the districts with the highest concentrations of low-income students. In 2023–24, before the first adequacy-directed payment, districts with the highest shares of low-income students needed an average of $3,460 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. In 2024–25, after the first adequacy payment, districts with the highest shares of low-income students needed an average of $3,067 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. That gap fell to $2,675 in 2025–26 and fell again to $2,281 under the enacted 2026–27 budget. In other words, districts with the highest shares of low-income students saw their average adequacy gap decline by $1,179 per student, or approximately 34%, between 2023–24 and 2026–27.

The same pattern appears across the other groups of districts, although their remaining gaps are smaller. Districts with the second-highest shares of low-income students saw their average adequacy gap fall from $1,976, before the first adequacy-directed payment, to $1,769 per student in 2024–25 to $1,563 in 2025–26 and $1,339 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $367 per student, or approximately 32%, over the three rounds of adequacy funding. Districts with the second-lowest shares of low-income students saw their gap fall from $1,266 to $1,147 to $1,028 and then to $886, a reduction of $380 per student, or approximately 30%. Districts with the lowest shares of low-income students saw the smallest reduction, from $558 to $513 in 2024–25 to $468 in 2025–26 and $402 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $156 per student, or approximately 28%.

These numbers show that adequacy funding is reaching the districts with the greatest need. The largest dollar reductions are occurring in districts with the highest concentrations of low-income students, while districts with lower concentrations of low-income students have smaller remaining gaps and smaller reductions. Pennsylvania still has significant work to do. Even under the enacted 2026–27 budget, districts with the highest shares of low-income students still need an average of $2,281 more per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. But the progress is clear. Continued adequacy investments are moving Pennsylvania toward a school funding system in which students' access to educational opportunity depends less on local wealth and more on actual student need.

Figure 2. Adequacy Funding Is Reaching Schools with the Highest Shares of Low-Income Students



Hispanic Student Enrollment is Associated with Some of the Largest Remaining Adequacy Gaps

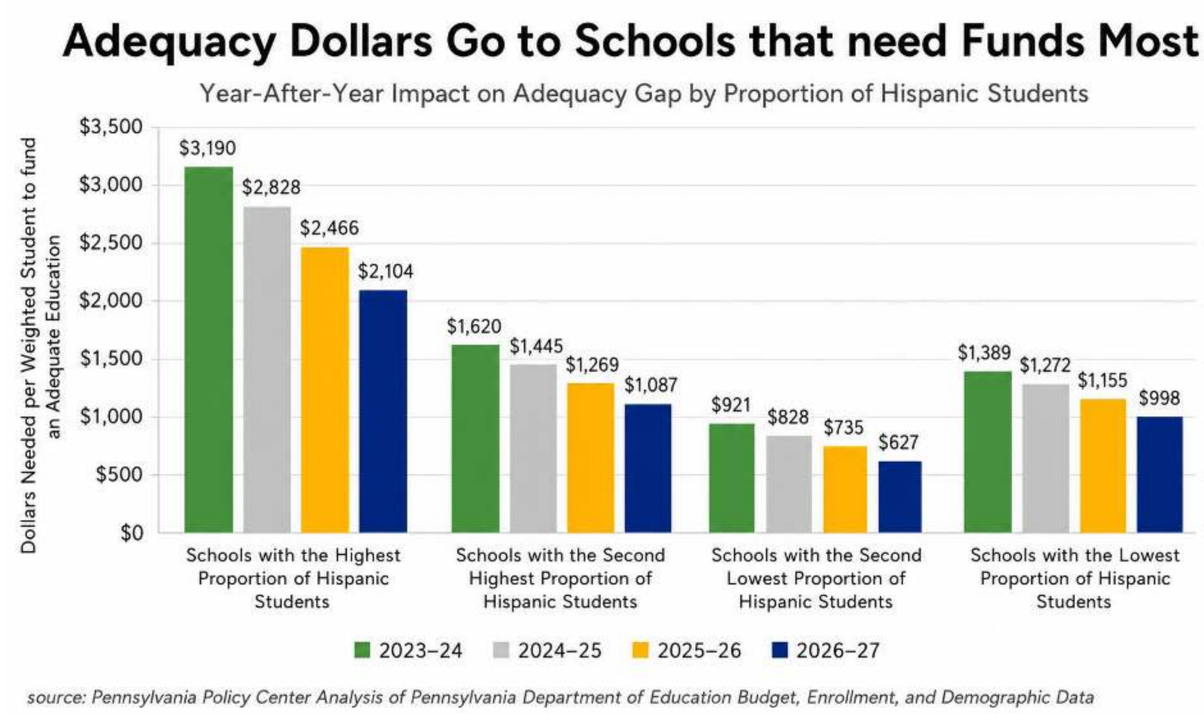
Moving next to Hispanic enrollment, Figure 3 shows a similar pattern. In 2023–24, before the first adequacy-directed payment, districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students needed an average of $3,190 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. In 2024–25, after the first adequacy payment, districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students needed an average of $2,828. That gap fell to $2,466 in 2025–26 and fell again to $2,104 under the enacted 2026–27 budget. This means districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students saw their average adequacy gap decline by $1,0886 per student, or approximately 34%, between 2023–24 and 2026–27.

The same general pattern appears across the other groups of districts, though their remaining gaps are smaller. Districts with the second-highest shares of Hispanic students saw their average adequacy gap fall from $1,620 per student in 2023-2024 to $1,445 in 2024–25 to $1,269 in 2025–26 and $1,087 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $533 per student, or approximately 33%. Districts with the second-lowest shares of Hispanic students saw their gap fall from $921 to $828 to $735 and then to $627, a reduction of $294 per student, or approximately 32%. Districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic students saw their average adequacy gap fall from $1,389 per student in 2023–24 to $1,272 in 2024–25 to $1,155 in 2025–26 and $998 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $391 per student, or approximately 28%.

One important pattern appears among districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic students. At first glance, this group may look like an outlier, since districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic students have a larger adequacy gap than districts in the group just above them. But this group includes two very different kinds of districts: very rural, predominantly white, low-income districts and very wealthy, predominantly white, high-income districts. On average, the presence of those very rural, low-wealth districts helps explain why districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic students have a larger funding gap than districts with the second-lowest shares.

This explains how Figure 3 captures two distinctly disadvantaged populations: districts with high Hispanic enrollment and rural low-income districts that tend to be predominantly white. Both sets of districts have been inequitably funded under Pennsylvania's school finance system, and adequacy funding is helping to close those gaps. For comparison, districts with the highest shares of low-income students saw their average adequacy gap decline by $1,179 per student, or approximately 34%, between 2023–24 and 2026–27, while districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students saw their average adequacy gap decline by $1,086 per student, also approximately 34%, over the same period. Together, these findings show that adequacy funding is directing the largest investments toward districts serving students who have historically experienced the greatest funding disparities. By reducing those disparities, adequacy funding advances both racial and economic equity.

Figure 3. Adequacy Funding is Reaching Schools with the Highest Shares of Hispanic Students



Black Student Enrollment is Associated with Some of the Largest Remaining Adequacy Gaps

Figure 4 shows the same pattern when school districts are grouped by the share of Black students.

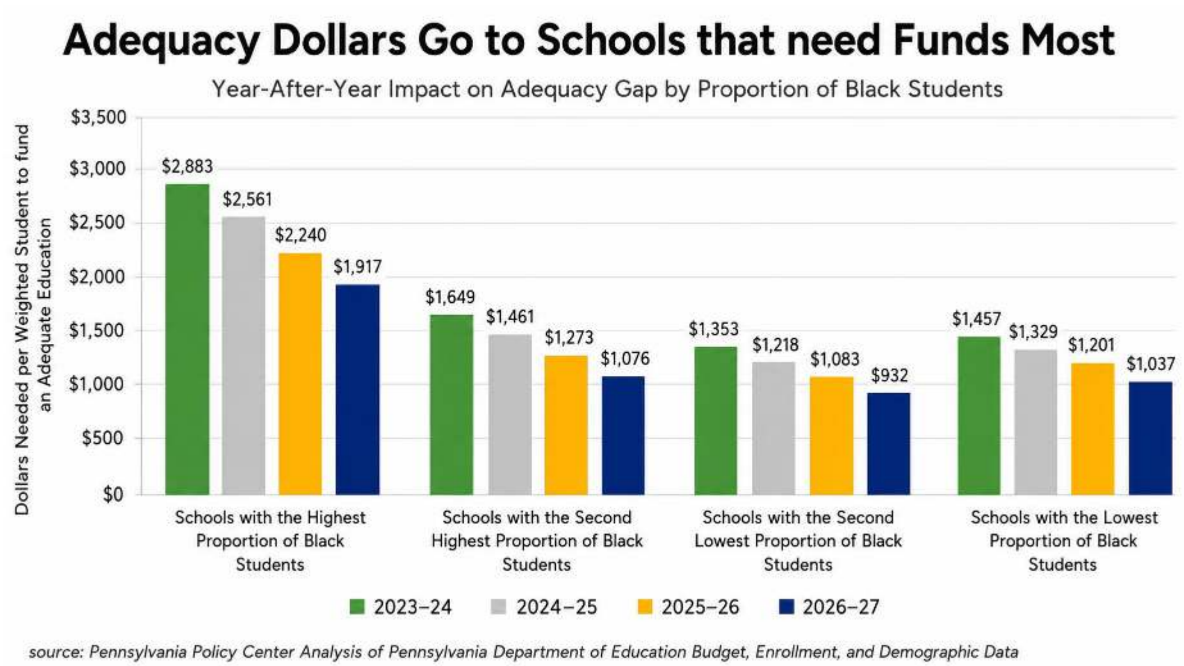
In 2023–24, before the first adequacy-directed payment, districts with the highest shares of Black students needed an average of $2,883 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. That gap fell to $2,561 in 2024-2025, $2,240 in 2025–26 and fell again to $1,917 under the enacted 2026–27 budget. This means that districts with the highest shares of Black students saw their average adequacy gap decline by $966 per student, or approximately 34%, between 2023–24 and 2026–27, over the three rounds of adequacy funding.

The same general pattern appears across the other groups of districts, though their remaining gaps are smaller. Districts with the second-highest shares of Black students saw their average adequacy gap fall from $1,649 per student in 2023–24 to $1,461 per student in 2024–25 to $1,273 in 2025–26 and $1,076 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $573 per student, or approximately 35%. Districts with the second-lowest shares of Black students saw their gap fall from $1,353 per student in 2023–24 to $1,218 to $1,083 and then to $932, a reduction of $421 per student, or approximately 31%. Districts with the lowest shares of Black students saw their average adequacy gap fall from $1,457 per student in 2023–24 to $1,329 in 2024–25 to $1,201 in 2025–26 and $1,037 under the enacted 2026–27 budget, a reduction of $420 per student, or approximately 29%.

As with the Hispanic enrollment analysis, districts with the lowest shares of Black students appear at first to be an outlier because their average adequacy gap is larger than the gap among districts with the second-lowest shares of Black students. But this group includes both relatively affluent, predominantly white districts and very rural, predominantly white, low-income districts. The presence of those rural, low-wealth districts helps explain why districts with the lowest shares of Black students have a larger average adequacy gap than districts with the second-lowest shares.

Figure 4 shows that districts with the highest shares of Black students continue to face the largest remaining funding gaps, but they are also seeing the largest gap reductions as adequacy funding is phased in. Adequacy funding is therefore helping to reduce racial inequities in school funding while also reaching rural low-income districts that have long struggled with weak local tax bases. The pattern is clear: when new state dollars are distributed through an adequacy framework, the districts with the greatest need see the greatest progress.

Figure 4. Adequacy Funding is Reaching Schools with the Highest Shares of Black Students



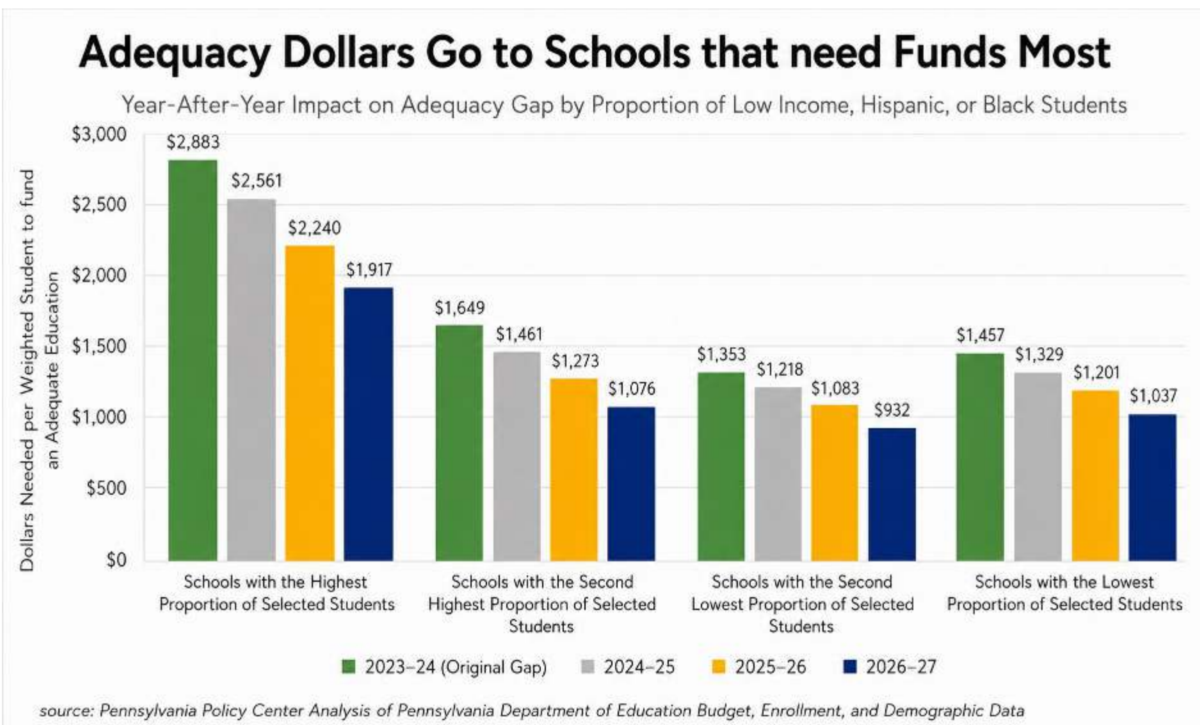
Adequacy Gaps Remain Largest in Districts Serving Students with the Greatest Needs

Figure 5 brings together the analyses of income, Black student enrollment, and Hispanic student enrollment to illustrate one of this report's central findings: Pennsylvania's school funding inequities affect communities across the entire Commonwealth. Districts serving the highest shares of low-income students and students of color continue to have the largest remaining funding needs. At the same time, many rural, predominantly white, low-income districts also remain substantially underfunded because of limited local tax capacity. These findings demonstrate that adequacy funding is advancing both racial and economic equity by directing resources to students and communities with the greatest need. Districts with the highest shares of low-income students still need an average of $2,281 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. Districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students still need $2,104 per student, and districts with the highest shares of Black students still need $1,917 per student.

The pattern is similar among districts with the second-highest shares of these student groups. Districts with the second-highest shares of low-income students still need $1,339 per student to reach adequacy, while districts with the second-highest shares of Hispanic students still need $1,087 and districts with the second-highest shares of Black students still need $1,076. These numbers are lower than the gaps among districts with the highest shares of low-income students and students of color, but they still show that many districts serving substantial shares of low-income students and students of color remain far from adequate funding.

The combined figure also shows why it is important to interpret districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic and Black students carefully. Districts with the lowest shares of Hispanic students still need $998 per student to reach adequacy, and districts with the lowest shares of Black students still need $1,037. These gaps are higher than the gaps among districts with the second-lowest shares of Hispanic and Black students because the groups with the lowest shares include some very rural, predominantly white, low-income districts with limited local tax capacity. By contrast, districts with the lowest shares of low-income students have the smallest remaining adequacy gap, at $402 per student. Taken together, Figure 5 shows both the progress Pennsylvania has made and the work that remains. Adequacy funding is reducing the largest gaps fastest, but the districts serving the highest shares of low-income students, Hispanic students, and Black students remain furthest from adequacy.

Figure 5. Remaining 2026–27 Adequacy Gaps are Largest in Districts Serving the Highest Shares of Historically Underserved Students



Conclusion

Pennsylvania is on a path toward adequately funded schools, and the evidence in this update shows that the path is working. Adequacy funding is reducing the largest gaps in the districts with the greatest need. Districts serving high shares of low-income students, Black students, and Hispanic students continue to face the largest remaining adequacy gaps, but they are also seeing some of the largest reductions as new state dollars are targeted through the adequacy framework.

That progress matters. For decades, Pennsylvania's school funding system relied too heavily on local wealth, leaving students in low-wealth communities with fewer resources and fewer opportunities than students in wealthier districts. The Commonwealth Court ruling made clear that this system was unconstitutional. The Basic Education Funding Commission and the new adequacy supplements created a framework for repair. The first two years of adequacy funding began that repair, and the enacted 2026–27 budget continues it.

But Pennsylvania is not yet at the finish line. Even under the enacted 2026–27 budget, districts with the highest shares of low-income students still need, on average, $2,281 more in funding per student, after accounting for differences in student needs, to reach adequacy. Districts with the highest shares of Hispanic students still need $2,104 more per student, and districts with the highest shares of Black students still need $1,917 more per student. These gaps represent missing resources in classrooms: fewer educators and support staff, larger class sizes, limited academic programming, fewer student services, and less capacity to provide the full range of opportunities students need.

One of the central findings of this analysis is that Pennsylvania's school funding inequities extend across both urban and rural communities. Districts serving the highest shares of low-income students, Black students, and Hispanic students continue to face the largest remaining adequacy gaps. At the same time, many low-income, predominantly white rural districts also remain substantially underfunded because they lack the local tax base needed to adequately support their schools. Together, these findings show that Pennsylvania's school funding inequities are driven less by geography than by disparities in local wealth. Educational opportunity should depend on student need—not a community's property value. Adequacy funding helps move Pennsylvania toward that goal by directing additional state resources to the students and communities with the greatest need.

The evidence in this report also shows that Pennsylvania has not yet done enough, but it has finally begun to do what works. Adequacy funding is moving the state toward a fairer and more constitutionally sound school funding system by directing resources to the students and districts with the greatest need. Continuing and strengthening these annual investments will be essential if Pennsylvania is to fulfill its constitutional obligation and ensure that every school district has the resources necessary to provide every student with a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary public education.

Anything less would slow the progress Pennsylvania has finally begun to make—and would leave too many students waiting for the educational opportunities they have always been owed.