



## Education Advocates Highlight Devastating Impacts of Inadequate State Funding for K-12 Public Education in Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG – Education advocates from the PA Schools Work campaign held a press conference on the Capitol steps in Harrisburg today to highlight the unacceptable reality facing school districts across the state – Pennsylvania ranks 45th out of 50 states in state share of revenue for school districts, resulting in inadequate and inequitable state funding.

“Pennsylvania ranks 45th in the nation for state share of funding for K-12 education,” said **Susan Spicka, Executive Director of Education Voters of Pennsylvania**. “This ranking is a clear and unequivocal measure of the state’s inadequate and inequitable school funding system, which is failing students and local taxpayers and weakening Pennsylvania’s future.”

Speakers made clear that Pennsylvania’s General Assembly is not doing its job to adequately fund PA public schools – and that they have the resources to put school districts in a better position in the coming years.

“The state is sitting on a \$7.5 billion surplus that results from unspent American Rescue Plan Funds and a \$3 billion state surplus that we ran in the fiscal year that ended June 30,” said **Marc Stier, Director of the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center**. “There’s over \$2.5 billion in the rainy-day fund. The state is now projected to run a budget surplus of over \$3 billion in the current year budget. So, there’s no excuse for inaction. The state has the money to give our kids the kind of education they deserve. The money is there - all that is missing is the will to spend it.”

“Earlier this year we thanked the PA legislature for increasing state education funding to help students regain their education footing, enter school buildings, and continue learning. However, those investments can’t and don’t offset generations of continual deprivation and under investment in our schools,” said **Tomea Sippio-Smith, K-12 Education Policy Director for Children First (formally Public Citizens for Children and Youth)**.

At the press conference, the PA Schools Work campaign reintroduced its latest [school district fact sheets](#) that show the impact of the state’s broken funding system on schools and students:

- Pennsylvania’s ranking as 45th in the nation for state share of funding for K-12 education is a clear and unequivocal measure of the state’s inadequate and inequitable school funding system.
- The state’s chronic underfunding is failing students and local taxpayers and weakening Pennsylvania’s future.
- State legislators must step up and fund our schools if we are going to improve our standing and reverse everything that number 45 represents.
- The General Assembly is sitting on \$7 billion in federal Covid relief dollars plus a better-than-expected influx in state revenue – they have no excuse for not acting.

“Pennsylvania’s Black and Brown students pay the biggest price,” said **Deborah Gordon Klehr, Executive Director of the Education Law Center**. “Fifty percent of all Black students and 40% of Latino students are concentrated in the 20% of districts with the lowest wealth. Despite some of the highest property tax rates in the Commonwealth, these communities simply cannot raise enough money to fill the gap. State funds fill this gap better in 44 other states – it’s time for Pennsylvania to do the same.”

“Now, at a time where the Commonwealth is becoming more diverse, the General Assembly chooses to have 277 school districts – more than half of all districts in the state – in a situation where they need at least \$2,000 more per student to adequately support their students’ learning needs so they can graduate ready to compete in today’s economy,” said **Tomas Varela Jr, Director of Advocacy & Communications for the Urban League of Philadelphia**.

[Click to view a recording of the press conference.](#)

[Click for a one-pager from the event outlining the consequences of lack of state funding for PA public schools.](#)

[Click to access the school district fact sheets.](#)