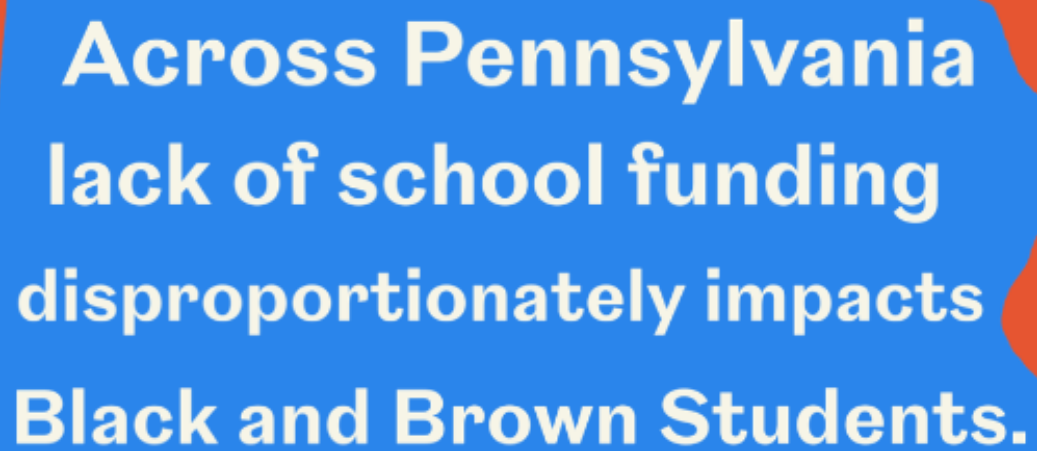


**Week 12 – Respondents Wrap Up**



**Across Pennsylvania  
lack of school funding  
disproportionately impacts  
Black and Brown Students.**

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We reached a major milestone in the Pennsylvania school funding lawsuit this week, as legislative leaders called their final four witnesses in their case defending our current school funding system.

On Valentine's Day, the court heard from a witness who had no love lost for teacher unions and other groups he has described as part of the "far-left edu-deep state": Max Eden, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the director of the think tank's Conservative Education Reform Network.

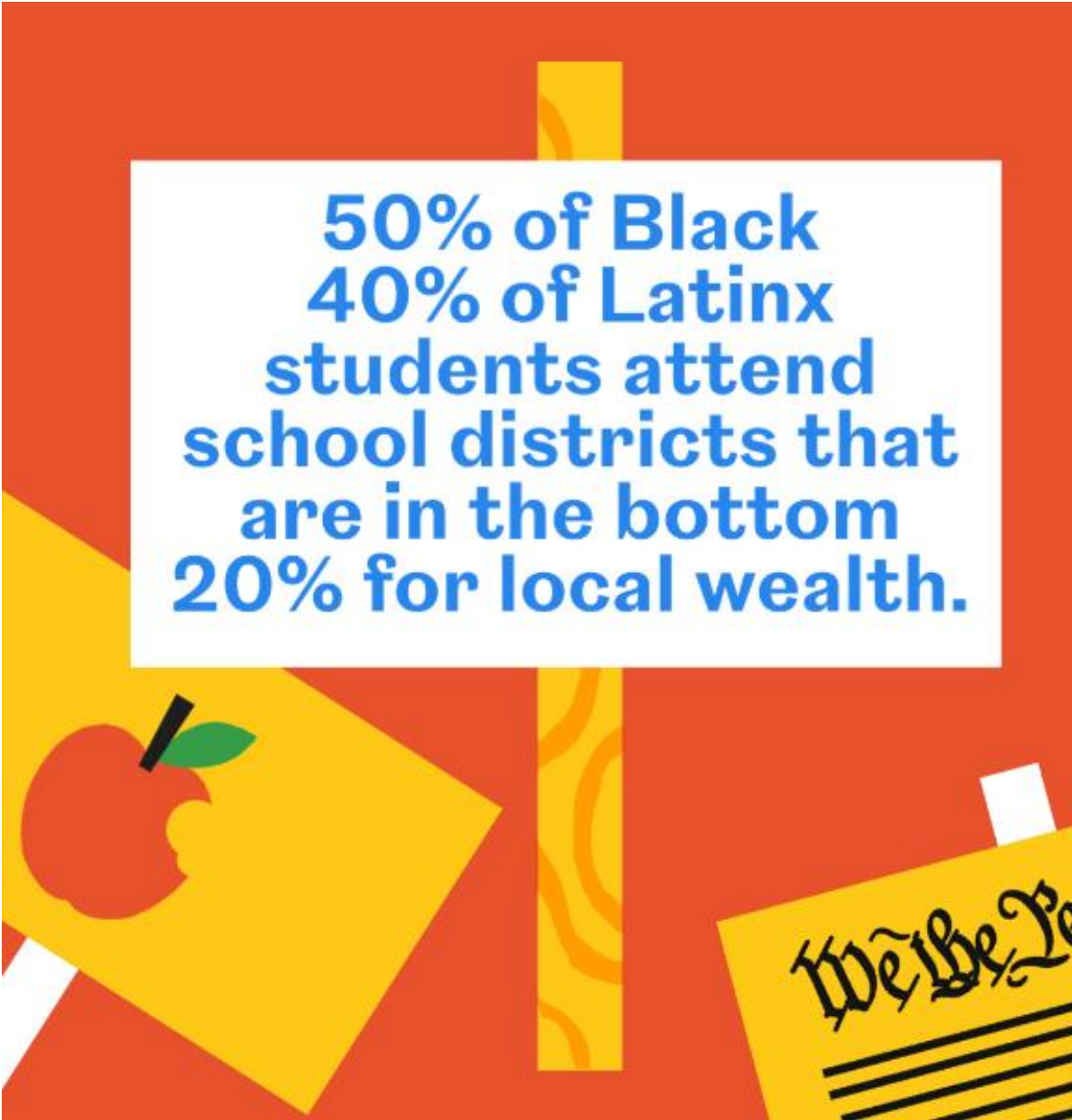
Eden acknowledged, when shown examples of his recent tweets, that he has "pretty strong views" and has used "some pretty adversarial terms" for those he disagrees with. These included suggesting that teachers who teach about gender identity may be doing so because they are trying to "groom" children for molestation, a tweet he said he regretted.

Eden acknowledged that his expert report did not include any of his own empirical research. Petitioners questioned the thoroughness of his review and analysis. They pointed out that the single study he cited on the issue of funding equity — showing Pennsylvania in the middle of the pack in equitable school funding — included an alternative measure indicating that Pennsylvania is the most regressive state in the country in its spending. Eden omitted this second measure from his report.

Dr. Abel Koury, a senior research scientist at the statistical consulting firm Far Harbor LLC, testified Tuesday on his analysis of the relationship between funding levels and districts' Average Growth Index (AGI), a measure of student progress on standardized tests. His analysis did not find any correlation.

On cross-examination, Koury conceded that he had not considered the possibility that, because AGI is designed to control for factors that teachers and school leaders cannot influence, it may already filter out the effects of underfunding.

Koury praised the research on the relationship between funding and achievement done by economist Rucker Johnson, an expert for petitioners in the case, calling it "super-rigorous."

An infographic with a red background. A white rectangular box in the center contains blue text. To the left, a yellow paper with a red apple and green leaf is pinned. To the right, a yellow paper with the text 'We the People' in a cursive font is pinned. A vertical yellow strip with a wavy pattern is in the center background.

**50% of Black  
40% of Latinx  
students attend  
school districts that  
are in the bottom  
20% for local wealth.**

On Wednesday, for the second time, a cyber charter school leader testified for respondents: Brian Cote, director of curriculum for 21st Century Cyber Charter School. Cote's attorney explained that the respondents had called cyber charter leaders to "illustrate that there is another path" for students who are dissatisfied

with their experience in their local school districts. The viability of this alternative option was questioned during cross examination. Only 12% of 21st Century's students are economically disadvantaged, and 0.3% are English learners. The cyber charter's graduation rate for low-income students is 43%, while the graduation rate for students with disabilities is 51% — both far below the statewide average.

Legislative leaders' final witness was Dr. Eric Hanushek, an economist, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and a long-time critic of school funding increases. He has testified in 24 previous school funding cases. He criticized a 2007 "costing-out" study commissioned by the Pennsylvania state legislature to determine what level of school funding is needed to allow students to meet state standards. He said he does not believe that any costing-out study is valid because there is insufficient research to establish any relationship between school funding and achievement.

During cross examination, Hanushek acknowledged that he has done no research on the needs of Pennsylvania children. He agreed that students with disabilities, students learning English, and economically disadvantaged students all require more school resources than their peers.

Trial now moves into its final stages. On Tuesday, petitioners will call Matthew Kelly as a rebuttal witness. **The Penn State professor, who previously testified as an expert back in November, is expected to be the final witness called in the case.**

The court will issue an order in the coming week scheduling any closing arguments and post-trial filings. Following all post-trial submissions, the court will render its decision on whether or not Pennsylvania is meeting its constitutional duty to provide a thorough and efficient system of public education for all students.

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**DAILY HIGHLIGHTS OF EACH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS NOW UP  
AT:  
[FUNDOURSCHOOLSPA.ORG/NEWS](https://fundourschoolspa.org/news)**

**“School funding, school resource equity, is  
an essential investment to advance student  
achievement.”**

— Economist Rucker Johnson during his testimony on January 21

**Our daily summaries and blog posts:**

- [Final Respondents' Witness Discusses 'Money Matters:' Dr. Eric Hanushek Testifies, Feb. 17](#) (Thursday)
- [Legislative Respondents Call Final 2 Witnesses, Feb. 16](#) (Wednesday)
- ['I Can't Say For Sure How It Would Have Changed Things:' Analysis Of Funding And Growth Scores Questioned, Feb. 15](#) (Tuesday)
- [Respondents Call A Witness With 'Some Pretty Strong Views,' Feb. 14](#) (Monday)

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**BREAKING NEWS**



## From pupil counting to plagiarism, Pa.'s school funding trial takes twists during defense phase



By Mallory Falk · February 17, 2022

[From pupil counting to plagiarism, Pa.'s school funding trial takes twists during defense phase](#)

(WHYY | KEYSTONE CROSSROADS)

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# The Philadelphia Inquirer

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**Four takeaways from Pa.'s landmark school-funding trial, two weeks into Republican witness**



by Maddie Hanna and Kristen A. Graham

Published Feb 11, 2022

[Four takeaways from Pa.'s landmark school-funding trial, two weeks into Republican witness](#)

(PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER)



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# DAILY LOCAL NEWS

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**Funding disparities are hindering the quality  
of our children's education**



**VOICES OF**

# INEQUITY

February 14, 2022 at 12:35 p.m.

**MEDIA NEWS GROUP** | Shameeka Browne and Tomea Sippio-Smitl

[Guest opinion: Funding disparities are hindering the quality of our children's education](#)

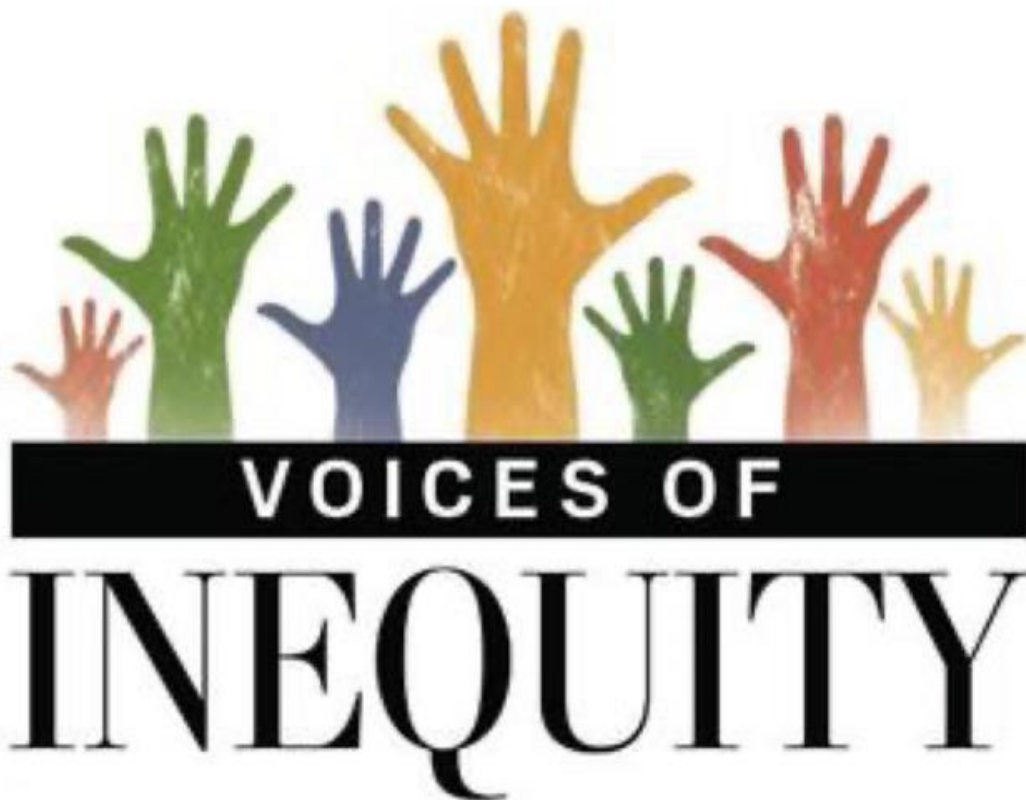
(DALY LOCAL NEWS)

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# THE REPORTER

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**Funding disparities are hindering the quality  
of our children's education**



**EMMA RESTREPO** | February 10, 2022 at 2:53 p.m.

[Neighboring districts show funding disparities](#)  
(THE REPORTER)

## **NEED RESOURCES?**

Are you an educator or an organizer or just a concerned citizen who wants to spread good info about the fight for fairly funded public schools in PA? For resources such as printable handouts, FAQ and access to the slide decks used in our webinars, [check out our Resources page](#).

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*Click above to check out this week's infographic slideshow.*

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