

Education Funding in Pennsylvania



Action. Access. Progress.

June 20, 2016

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Welcome & Introduction



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How we got here

The Problem

Pennsylvania School Funding:

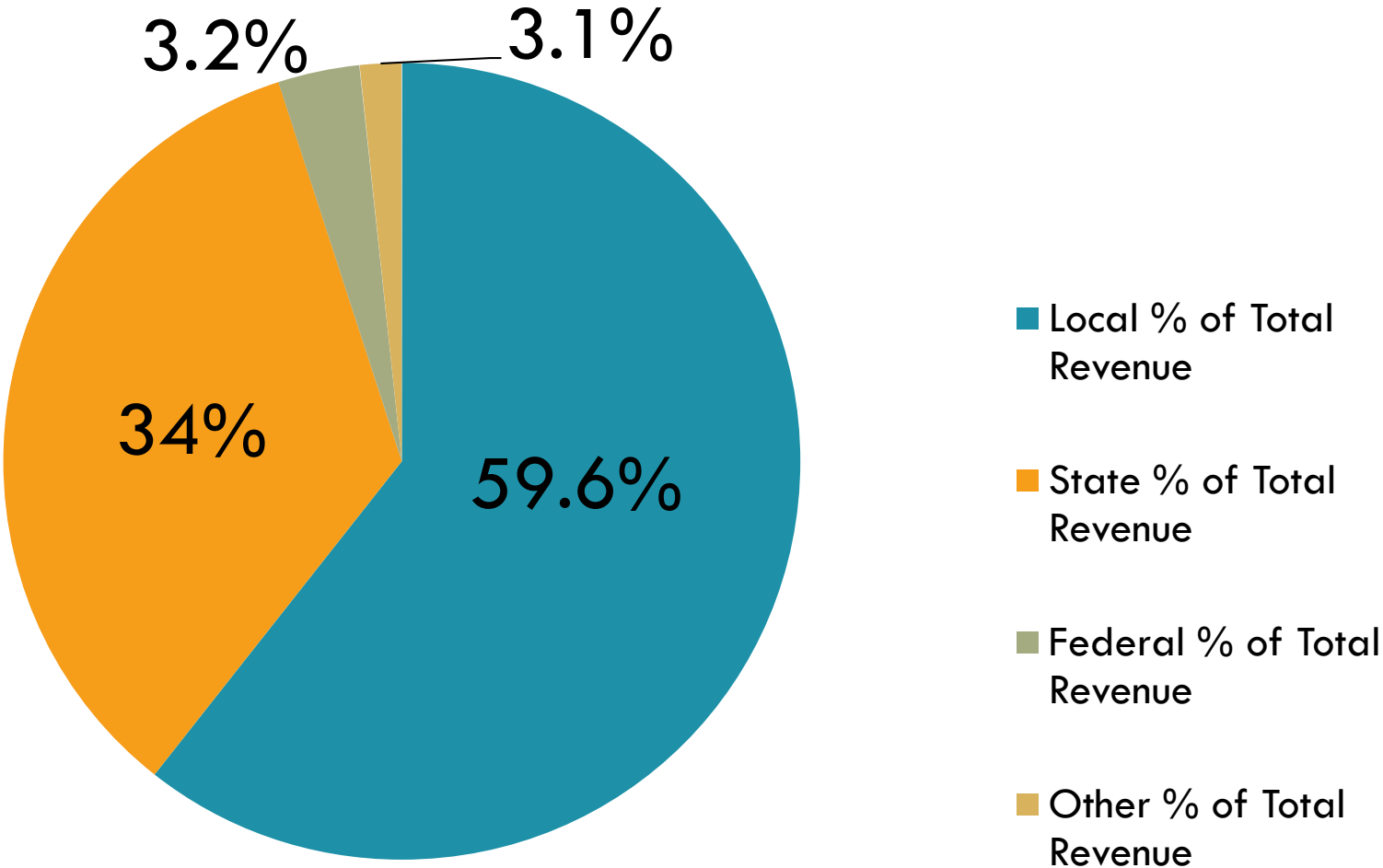
1. Not Fair to Students
2. Not Fair to Taxpayers
3. Not Fair to their Communities

The Problem

Pennsylvania School Funding:

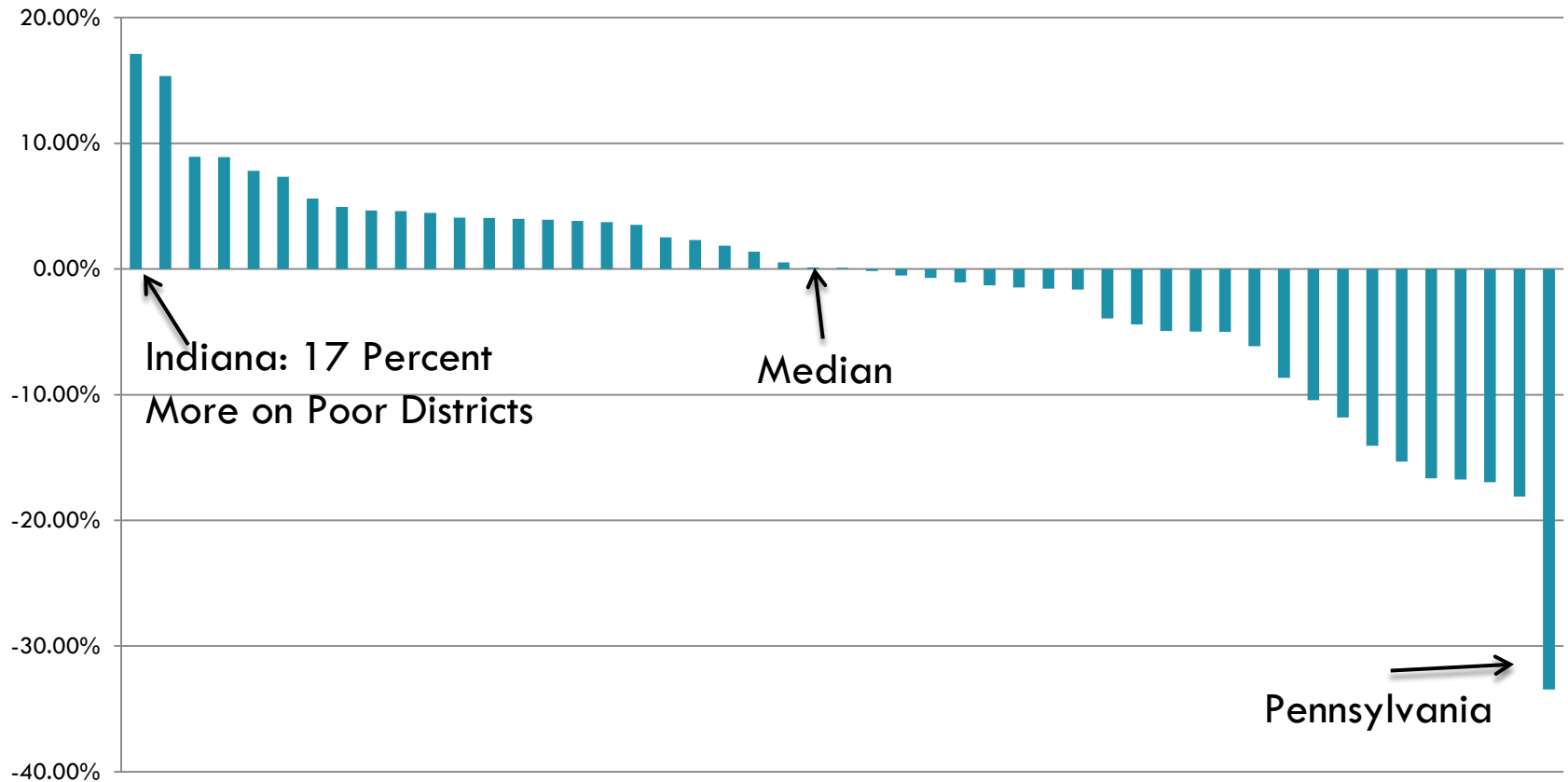
1. Low state contribution
2. Long term lack of funding formula
3. No goal of fully funding schools

Sources of Funds



Ratio of State and Local Money Spent on Rich Districts vs. Poor Districts

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Tax Disparity in Delaware County 2014-15

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District	Tax burden: Equalized Mills	Revenue per Student
Marple Newtown SD	12.6	\$21,994.58
Radnor Township SD	13.8	\$23,134.07
Rose Tree Media SD	16.6	\$22,070.70
Chester-Upland SD	18.8	\$17,593.46
Haverford Township SD	19.0	\$17,605.61
Penn-Delco SD	19.7	\$15,306.84
Springfield SD	20.8	\$16,960.64
Garnet Valley SD	21.3	\$18,864.08
Interboro SD	24.3	\$17,411.21
Upper Darby SD	25.5	\$13,767.43
Wallingford-Swarthmore SD	27.1	\$19,667.04
Southeast Delco SD	28.7	\$15,296.67
Ridley SD	28.9	\$17,468.90
Chichester SD	30.4	\$19,398.06
William Penn SD	32.8	\$15,633.13

Local *Effort* is Not the Problem: Radnor vs. William Penn

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Radnor S.D.

- Tax rate: 13.8 mil
- Local tax revenue per child: \$19,675
- State per student contribution: \$3,279
- State/local per student: \$22,954
- **Students in poverty: 8.2%**

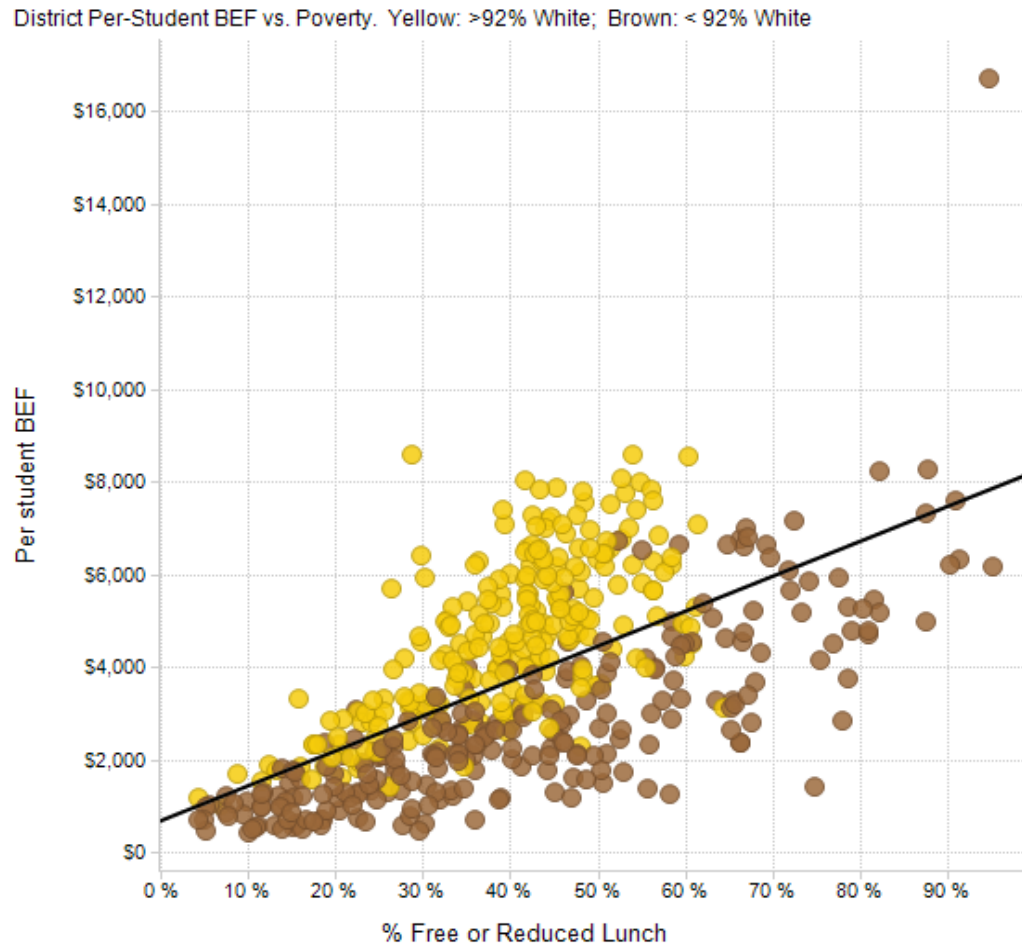
William Penn S.D.

- Tax rate: 32.8 mil
- Local tax revenue per child: \$8,231
- State per student contribution: \$6,809
- State/local per student: \$15,039
- **Students in poverty: 47.9%**

Difference = \$7,915

The Result: Poor Minority Districts Underfunded

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Source: David Mosenkis, POWER

The Road to Adequacy?

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- 2007 study commissioned by the Legislature found **\$4.4 billion** was needed to meet state proficiency standards.
- Gov. Rendell sets target of \$2.4 billion and begins regular increases.
- Governor Corbett takes office and cuts \$851 million dollars of education funding.

The Reckoning

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- There is no longer an Adequacy Target for what districts need.
- The Legislature appropriates whatever is convenient to it, without regard to state standards or any survey of what districts need to meet state proficiency standards.

The Bigger Context

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- School district fixed costs expected to increase \$600 million this year
- 85 % of districts plan to raise taxes
- 46% of districts plan to cut staff
- 34% of districts plan to increase class size
- Even with \$200 million increase, 2% of districts can fully restore 2010-11 cuts

Full Report at www.pasa-net.org

How much do school districts need today?

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- Despite the state not wanting to publish an “adequacy” amount, the Law Center conducted a study which used the new funding formula to give estimates of the amount the state needs to contribute.
- State funds still needed:
 - **Between \$3.2 and \$4.2 billion**
- Study available: www.pubintlaw.org/befc-adequacy-calculation/

What would adequate funding mean for districts?

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Rank	School District	County	Per Student share of \$3.188b increase*	Per Student share of \$4.2b increase*
1	Duquesne City SD	Allegheny	\$7,773	\$10,436
2	York City SD	York	\$7,376	\$9,903
3	Reading SD	Berks	\$6,752	\$9,065
4	Harrisburg City SD	Dauphin	\$5,720	\$7,680
5	Chester-Upland SD	Delaware	\$5,383	\$7,227
6	Midland Borough SD	Beaver	\$4,882	\$6,554
7	Lancaster SD	Lancaster	\$4,812	\$6,461
8	Sto-Rox SD	Allegheny	\$4,801	\$6,446
9	Shenandoah Valley SD	Schuylkill	\$4,680	\$6,283
10	Sharon City SD	Mercer	\$4,648	\$6,240
11	Allentown City SD	Lehigh	\$4,629	\$6,214
12	Lebanon SD	Lebanon	\$4,219	\$5,665
13	Farrell Area SD	Mercer	\$3,971	\$5,331
14	Erie City SD	Erie	\$3,956	\$5,312
15	Clairton City SD	Allegheny	\$3,944	\$5,295
16	New Castle Area SD	Lawrence	\$3,867	\$5,191
17	New Kensington-Arnold SD	Westmoreland	\$3,840	\$5,156
18	Wilkes-Barre Area SD	Luzerne	\$3,827	\$5,138
19	Greater Johnstown SD	Cambria	\$3,755	\$5,042
20	Carbondale Area SD	Lackawanna	\$3,745	\$5,028
21	Panther Valley SD	Carbon	\$3,712	\$4,984
22	Philadelphia City SD	Philadelphia	\$3,697	\$4,963
23	Big Beaver Falls Area SD	Beaver	\$3,659	\$4,913
24	Aliquippa SD	Beaver	\$3,656	\$4,909
52	William Penn SD	Delaware	\$2,504	\$3,361

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School Funding Lawsuit



William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.: Petition

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Filed: November 2014

Court: Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court

Count I: “The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”

-Article III, Section 14

Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Count II: Equal Protection

William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.: Petitioners

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William Penn School District
Panther Valley School District
School District of Lancaster
Greater Johnstown School District
Wilkes-Barre Area School District
Shenandoah Valley School District
Seven parents (2 from Philadelphia)
NAACP – Pennsylvania State Conference
Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools*

* Includes 150 public school districts and 13 Intermediate Units

William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.: Respondents

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Pennsylvania Department of Education
President Pro-Tempore of PA Senate
Speaker of the PA House of Representatives
The Governor of the Commonwealth
Pennsylvania State Board of Education
Secretary of Education

William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.: Remedy

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We are asking the court to:

- Declare that the current system of funding our schools is unconstitutional
- Order the legislature to cease using an inadequate funding scheme
- Order the legislature to create and maintain a funding system that will enable all students to meet state academic standards

William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.: Current Status:

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Governor and Legislative leaders argued that the case is not “justiciable;” the issue cannot be heard by the courts.

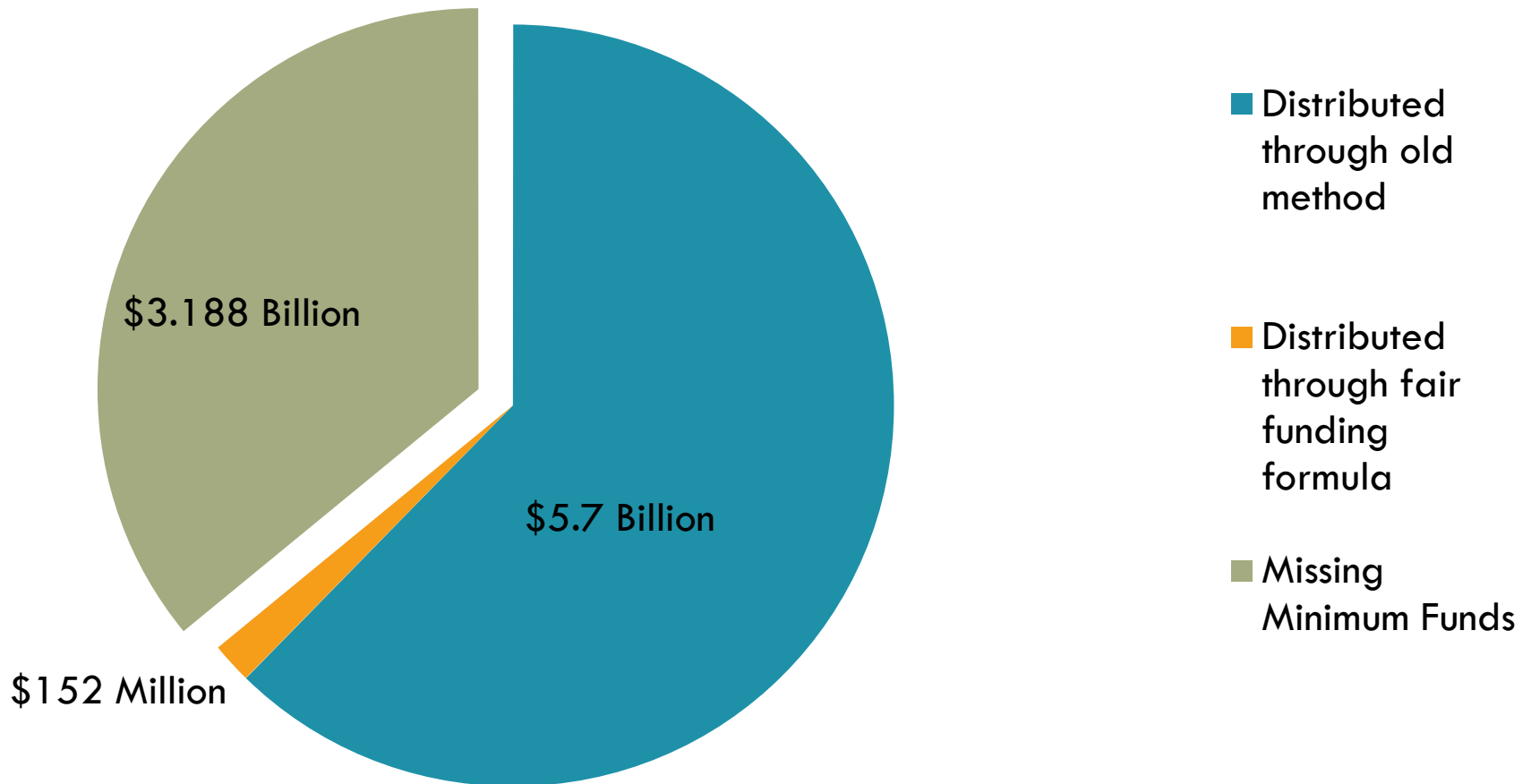
April 2015: Commonwealth Court dismissed the case on this basis.

May 2015: Appeal to Pennsylvania Supreme Court (as a matter of right)

September 13, 2016: Oral argument in Philadelphia

Does the Fair Funding Formula End the Suit? NO

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***William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.*: Legal Arguments by the Governor and Legislators**

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- Similar cases decided in 1999; Supreme Court ruled there were not manageable standards.
- Process for securing a remedy is messy and time-consuming.
- The only obligation the legislature has is to “turn the lights on;” they are meeting that obligation.

***William Penn SD et al., v. PDE et al.:* Legal Arguments by the Families and School Districts**

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Today there are measurable standards:

- Legislature has prescribed what children should learn
- Legislature has established standardized tests to measure learning.
- Legislature is capable of determining how much it costs for children to learn content as shown in the 2007 Costing Out study

No Court in any state has ever held that equal protection claims are not justiciable.

The Court is the only body that is legally obligated to protect children's constitutional rights.

Has this been done before?

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YES!

- There have been successful constitutional lawsuits in 36 other states.
- Seven other states have the same exact clause.
 - All seven times it has been found to be justiciable

Will this help?

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YES!

- Studies show that funding lawsuits increases funds to students that need it most and increases academic achievement in long term
- It would break political impasse over funding by invoking independent process based on cost analysis

What Can I Do?

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Come to (and send students?) to
argument!

Write a Letter to the Editor

Thank You



Action. Access. Progress.

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www.pubintl.org

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June 20, 2016

William Penn School District