

RESOLUTION

Whereas Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court, on February 7, 2023, found that our current system for funding public schools is unconstitutional, failing to fulfill the Pennsylvania constitution's promise of a "thorough and efficient system of public education" — responding to a lawsuit filed by six school districts, the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, and parents; and

Whereas the court found that education is a "fundamental right;" and

Whereas the court found that school districts "which struggle to raise enough revenue through local taxes to cover the needs of their students lack the inputs that are essential elements of a thorough and efficient system of public education – adequate funding; courses, curricula, and other programs that prepare students to be college and career ready; sufficient, qualified, and effective staff; safe and adequate facilities; and modern, quality instrumentalities of learning;" and

Whereas the court found "that money does matter, and economically-disadvantaged students and historically underperforming students can overcome challenges if they have access to the right resources that wealthier districts are financially able to provide;" and

Whereas the Basic Education Funding Commission, a panel of legislators and executive branch designees, found that Pennsylvania school districts are collectively underfunded by \$5.4 billion and proposed that the state should provide \$5.1 billion to close this gap in seven years, plus an additional \$956 million tax equity supplement over seven years for communities that have faced the steepest local tax burdens; and

Whereas Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget endorses the work of the commission and fulfils the first year of the commission's seven-year plan with a \$1.1 billion increase in basic education funding, with most of this funding targeted to public schools that have been shortchanged by the current unconstitutional system in the small towns, suburbs, and cities where students have been the most deeply underfunded; and

Whereas the Governor's budget stands up for our students by putting forward the first step of a transformative plan for the state to deliver on its responsibility to fully fund public schools in Pennsylvania based on what children need to succeed, so that students all students, regardless of zip code and community wealth, have meaningful opportunities; and

Whereas the court directed the General Assembly and the Governor to enact a plan to address the constitutional deficiencies identified in its opinion, which would include all seven years of funding called for by the Basic Education Funding Commission; and

Whereas all school districts will materially benefit from the Governor's proposal and adoption of a plan to provide for it to continue for seven years until the funding deficiencies identified by the commission are overcome; and

Whereas every community should have enough funding to serve their students, regardless of wealth; and

Whereas underfunding is a statewide problem in Pennsylvania public schools, and only statewide action can reduce the deep disparities in educational resources that define our school funding system; and

Whereas the time is now to take action, for our children and for Pennsylvania's future; therefore be it

Resolved, that SCHOOL DISTRICT urges the General Assembly to adopt Governor Shapiro's historic state budget proposal and to pass legislation making the necessary multiyear commitment to address Pennsylvania's entire constitutional and moral obligation to fully and fairly fund public schools; and

Further resolved, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the governor's office, to the PA Secretary of Education, and to state senator(s) _____ and state representative(s) _____, state legislators who represent our school district.