

FUND OUR FUTURE

2019-20 Budget Talking Points

- ✓ Pennsylvania ranks 46 out of 50 states in the proportion of funding it provides to support public schools. Despite increasing education funding every year since Governor Wolf was elected, Pennsylvania provides 38% of education funding; local home and property owners bear the bulk of the cost of education. (*National Center for Education Statistics*)
- ✓ Pennsylvania has the biggest gap between per student spending in poor and wealthy school districts – and the equity gap is growing. It reached \$3,778 per student in 2016-17, up from \$3,058 just four years earlier. (*Keystone Research Center*)

We urge state legislators to:

- **Pass** Governor Wolf's proposed \$310 million increase in funding for basic, special, early childhood and career and technical education. It's a small down payment on the estimated \$3-4 billion in additional state funding needed to enable all students to meet state academic standards.
- **Fund** PlanCon so that school districts with can build and renovate schools without raising relying solely on local property taxes. No child should attend a crumbling or overcrowded school; schools with lead-tainted water, asbestos and rodents; or schools without proper heating and cooling systems.
- **Increase** Community College and Temple University funding. Higher education has been flat-funded in Pennsylvania for too long. Rising tuition is driving student debt up and enrollments down. It's time to invest in our colleges and universities.
- **Oppose** HB 800, 356 & 357. These bills will drain even more tax dollars from public school budgets without transparency or accountability for how money is spent. Harmful education bills must not be used as bargaining chips by lawmakers and governor as they work on a budget compromise.

House Bill 800 – EITC vouchers – gives tax breaks to businesses and wealthy individuals to underwrite private school “scholarships” for children attending private schools. An “escalator” clause will increase tax credits every year, diverting \$500+ million from state revenues over 10 years. Until all schools are properly funded, Pennsylvania should not use tax dollars to subsidize private schools.

House Bills 356 and 357 are not charter school reform. These bills remove control over charter school expansion and the sale of surplus school buildings from elected school boards, who answer to local taxpayers and voters, and give it to unelected Harrisburg bureaucrats and political appointees.

Investing in education isn't a partisan issue. Every child needs a rigorous, well-rounded education. Legislators can make that a reality by funding education adequately for every child, in every community. Our future and theirs depends on it.