

What's Wrong with K-12 Public Education Funding in Pennsylvania?

The PROBLEM

- *While state law expects every student to be held accountable to demonstrate proficiency in key academic subjects, opportunities for students to learn depend on the wealth of the community in which they live.*
- *Available resources among Pennsylvania's poorest and wealthiest school districts vary from \$7,000 to \$17,000 per student per year.*
- *Education funding is excessively dependent on local property taxes. Pennsylvania raises more than 44% of its K-12 revenues from property taxes compared to a national average of less than 29% from this source (a \$3 billion per year difference).*

The CAUSE

- *The share of K-12 costs paid by state funding in Pennsylvania is only 35.6%, far below the national average of nearly 50%, and among the bottom five states. (US Census Bureau, April 2007)*
- *State appropriations per student for K-12 costs in Pennsylvania are more than \$400 per student below the national average, \$300+ below Ohio, and between \$1,500 to \$3,500 below our neighboring states Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia. (US Census Bureau, April 2007)*
- *Pennsylvania has not had a rational and fair system of funding schools since 1991.*
- *Since 1991, the Pennsylvania Legislature has imposed on school districts non-reimbursed costs for special education and charter schools now amounting to more than \$1.5 billion dollars per year.*

The SOLUTION

- *Governor Rendell and the members of the General Assembly must accept responsibility to fix this problem now.*
- *Governor Rendell and the members of the General Assembly must establish and fund a rational K-12 education funding system that*
 - *is built upon the principles of equity, adequacy, efficiency, accountability and predictability; and*
 - *uses a statewide funding formula for school district subsidy that recognizes the number of students taught, the relative wealth of a district, and the actual costs of educating every student to achieve Pennsylvania's academic standards.*

