

Josh Shapiro's PA Education Budget

Is School Funding Important?

Over the last few decades, a wealth of research has come out that has found that schools do play a role in students' life outcomes and that increasing school funding can improve those outcomes. Specifically, better school funding can improve student performance, postsecondary degree attainment, lower the chance a student ends up in poverty, and increase their future income post-graduation. Additionally, increasing student exposure to high quality teachers can improve their post-graduation outcomes, which can be achieved in part through increasing teacher salary by increasing school funding.

Why Is This Moment Important?

In 2023, a Pennsylvania court ruled that the way Pennsylvania allocates money violates the commonwealth's constitutional obligation to provide for "... provide a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth." Following no appeal from Republican leaders in the General Assembly, leaders in the General Assembly and the Governor have to change the way money is allocated to school districts. Josh Shapiro frames his education budget proposal through the lens of this court decision, highlighting how now is the time for a historic investment in education funding and that the distribution of school funds need to be reformed.

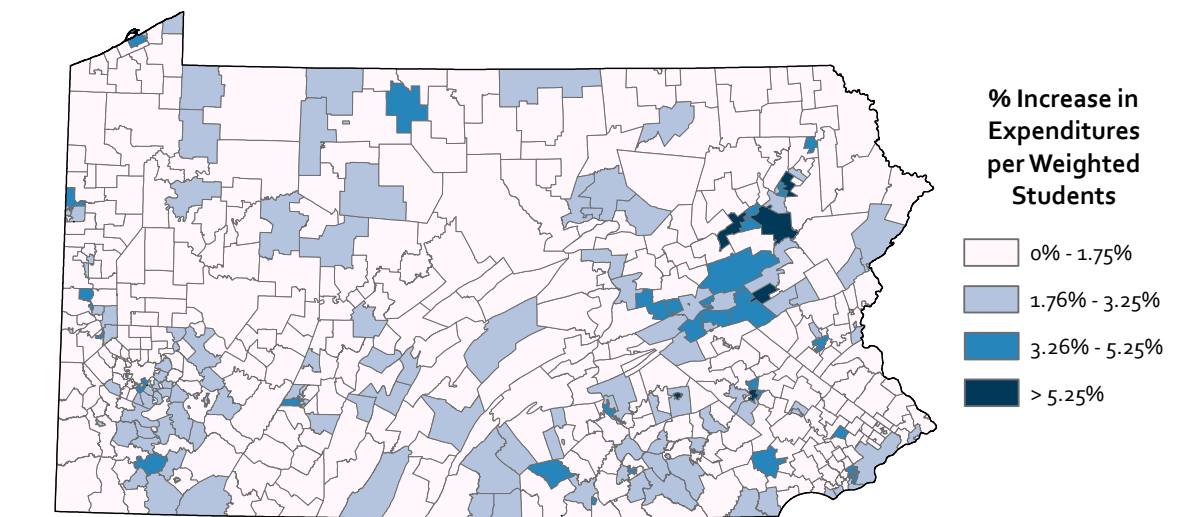
Impact on Urbanicity Disparities

A Brief Overview of School Funding in PA

School funding in Pennsylvania has been plagued by inequities over the last few decades. Additionally, despite increasing school funding between 2001 and 2011, those increases were reversed in 2011, with significant cuts occurring and the state only meeting one-third of its school funding goal. Following these cuts, the Basic Education Funding formula was passed in 2016. A hold-harmless provision in the formula, though, locks money in schools with declining enrollment by preventing school districts from receiving less money than the previous year. This provision disproportionately harms Black and Latinx students.

Initial Observations of Where Money Is Going

A core piece of Josh Shapiro's education budget is a \$1,100,000,000 increase in Basic Education Funding, with about \$900,000,000 going towards an "adequacy investment". Schools would be given enough money to be spending about \$13,700 per student. The reality of this allocation means that schools in the northeastern part of the commonwealth see the largest % increase in expenditures per weighted student, as well as in the suburbs around Pittsburgh.



Impact on Racial Disparities

Impact on District Wealth Divide