

Michael Cattell
EDTHP 518 Final Paper Outline + Bibliography
February 27, 2024

1. Introduction

2. Statement of Problem

- 2.1. Debate over how much funding schools should receive has been prevalent, going back to the 1960s with the Coleman Report and the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The federal government contributes comparatively little, with state funding and revenue raised from property taxes required to fund public schools.
- 2.2. In Pennsylvania, debate over how to fund schools culminated in the passage of Act 35 of 2016, which established a funding formula to be used annually to determine the bulk of the state's allocation to public schools using different community and demographic characteristics. A sticking point in this formula, though, is that it prevents school districts from receiving less money than they received in the 2013-14 school year, regardless of changes in enrollment in the district.
- 2.3. Funding equities related to this formula and broader disinvestment in public schools resulted in a court case that ruled the school funding method Pennsylvania uses is unconstitutional under the state constitution. This case required the state to increase funding for public schools.

3. Policy Window

- 3.1. As mentioned above, the court case is key to the timing of this proposed increase in public school investment; it is framed by Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro as a once-in-a-generation time to invest in schools.
- 3.2. This, along with the court case, is part of a much longer fight over increasing public school funding in Pennsylvania.

4. Strengths of the Policy

- 4.1. This policy would be the most significant one-year increase in state investment in schools.
- 4.2. The proposed budget purports to remedy past disinvestment in certain school districts, which represents recognition of a past wrong by an institution.

5. Weaknesses of the Policy

- 5.1. This proposed budget falls short of the recommended investment of ~\$6,000,000,000 investment in public education that was recommended by expert witnesses in the funding court case.

I am going to be adding to the strengths and weaknesses, but they will be based on doing some data analysis I have not had a chance to complete yet.

Bibliography

Dhaliwal, T. K., & Bruno, P. (2021). The rural/nonrural divide? K–12 district spending and implications of equity-based school funding. *AERA Open*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420982549>

This article discusses how a funding formula implemented in California impacted rural education funding. This will be helpful for discussing possible policy recommendations.

Jackson, C. K., Johnson, R. C., & Persico, C. (2015). The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes: Evidence from school finance reforms. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 131(1), 157–218. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv036>

This article discusses the impact of school funding on long-term life outcomes. It will be helpful for writing about how education funding is a problem that needs to be addressed on a broad scale.

Kelly, M. G., & Maselli, A. (2022). School finance policies, racial disparities, and the exploding educational debt: Egregious evidence from Pennsylvania. *Journal of Education Human Resources*, 41(3), 514–533. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jehr-2022-0003>

This article provides information on the recent history of education funding in Pennsylvania. It also provides analysis of the effects of the Act 35 funding formula, including how it disproportionately impacts different racial groups. This will be helpful for writing about why education funding in Pennsylvania specifically needs to be addressed.

Morrison, O. (2024, February 6). Shapiro proposes ‘historic’ \$1 billion increase in education funding to address inequities. *WHYY*. <https://whyy.org/articles/shapiro-historic-1-billion-increase-education-funding-pennsylvania-budget/>

This article gives some context for the governor’s proposed education budget, including statements from the governor that show how he is framing this proposed budget. This will be helpful for writing about the policy window.

Steinberg, M. P., & Quinn, R. (2015). A tale of two decades: New evidence on adequacy and equity in Pennsylvania. *Journal of Education Finance*, 40(3), 273–299. doi.org/10.1177/2332858420982549

This article also provides history of education funding in Pennsylvania. It has information on splits between rural, suburban, and urban districts, which provides a nice supplement to the Kelly & Maselli (2022) article. This will also help with the Kelly & Maselli article in showing why education funding in Pennsylvania needs to be addressed.