

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

‘Fair funding’ could be long wait

This year, Pennsylvania provides nearly \$6 billion in basic funding for Pennsylvania’s 500 school districts.

The state does not allocate an equal amount per student to every district.



Commentary by
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It gives money to school districts based on wealth.

Poor districts like Pottstown receive a lot more money per pupil than wealthy districts like Abington.

However, there has been a widespread consensus that the distribution formula needs to be adjusted even more to provide extra money for needy districts.

In 2014, the legislature established a “Fair Funding” commission to determine a new formula to distribute state subsidies based on a district’s wealth, local tax effort, and student demographics.

In 2016, the legislature adopted the new formula. BUT it called for the new formula to be phased in very slowly (more than 25 years for full implementation) because a lot more districts — 363 — would lose funding than gain funding — 137.

Of the \$6 billion total education budget, about \$1.1 billion would be redistributed.

For the most part, urban districts and districts in southeastern Pennsylvania would gain money and those in the west and north would lose money.

And there is the problem. If you represent Altoona, for example, would you like to tell your district it will receive \$13.7 million less annually so Pottstown can receive \$13.3 million more?

You would not, if you have any desire to get re-elected.

The Pottstown school community frequently points out that it is “underfunded” by \$13.3 million. That may not change soon.

Fair funding facts	
Basic education budget (2017-2018)	\$5.9 billion
Amount to be redistributed	\$1.1 billion (20%)
Districts receiving MORE money	137
Districts receiving LESS money	363

School district	County	Increased funding
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	\$402,599,675
Reading	Berks	\$94,651,945
Allentown	Lehigh	\$57,641,049
York	York	\$50,459,578
Lancaster	Lancaster	\$40,261,437
Harrisburg	Dauphin	\$29,354,118
Erie City	Erie	\$27,581,655
Scranton	Lackawanna	\$27,214,474
Wilkes-Barre	Luzerne	\$25,229,170
Bethlehem	Northampton	\$19,203,703
Pocono Mount.	Monroe	\$17,416,023
E. Stroudsburg	Monroe	\$17,070,197
Upper Darby	Delaware	\$15,748,956
Pottstown	Montgomery	\$13,269,948
Lebanon City	Lebanon	\$12,601,608

School district	County	Decreased funding
Pittsburgh	Allegheny	\$67,972,958
Altoona Area	Blair	\$13,784,907
Armstrong	Armstrong	\$12,230,410
Connellsville	Fayette	\$12,092,683
Penncrest	Crawford	\$11,087,762
Butler Area	Butler	\$11,014,752
Pleasant Valley	Monroe	\$10,974,093
Warren County	Warren	\$10,929,222
Punxsutawney	Jefferson	\$9,633,309
Penn-Stratford	Westmoreland	\$9,314,861
Norwin	Westmoreland	\$9,119,937
Albert Gallatin	Fayette	\$8,697,844
Forest Hills	Cambria	\$8,579,638
South Side	Beaver	\$8,557,294
Plum Borough	Allegheny	\$7,725,893

WINNERS AND LOSERS — Implementation of the fair funding formula to re-distribute state subsidies to Pennsylvania’s 500 school districts would create winners and losers from the current system. As an example, the top 15 winning/losing school districts are shown in the charts, above.