

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Skyrocketing costs ... better results?

The Pennsylvania Senate is studying the effectiveness of standardized testing.

Implementation of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement has been delayed until the 2021-2022 school year, and there is talk of replacing them with SATs, which college-bound students have taken since the 1920s.

Statewide testing has changed so often in recent decades that no school district can provide an accurate assessment, over time, as to how well it's performing.

That's especially difficult in districts like Pottstown with changing demographics. As the chart below shows, the percentage of Pottstown's

low-income students has quadrupled over the last four decades.

The cost of education has also increased exponentially.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

Pottstown School District spending has been triple the rate of inflation in recent decades, fueled mostly by huge increases in the number of specialists and aides.

Has all this actually increased student performance?

Like most school communities, the Pottstown School District members assume more spending

automatically means a better quality of education.

That's just not so. We need to fundamentally rethink how we use our resources. We can't afford to do things the same old way.

Swelling staff, skyrocketing costs		
1974-1975		
Enrollment		4,481
Percentage low income		18%
Speech, therapists, psychologists		3
Special education enrollment		136
Special education teachers		8
Classroom aides		5
Budget		\$7,099,876
Cost per pupil		\$1,584
Four decades later ...		
2018-2019		
Enrollment		3,207
Percentage low income		72.5%
Speech, therapists, psychologists		20
Special education enrollment		564
Special education teachers		37
Classroom aides		63
Budget		\$62,667,927
Cost per pupil		\$19,544
Increase in per pupil costs, 1974 to 2018		
		1,225%
Rate of inflation, 1974 to 2018		
		409%