



# K-12 EDUCATION

Ensure each child in Pennsylvania has the opportunity for an adequate and equitable high-quality public education. All children in Pennsylvania deserve to be provided an adequate and equitable high-quality public education, regardless of the zip code they live in. This includes equipping students with supports to meet their special education needs and focuses on building skills to successfully graduate, transition to higher education or enter the workforce career ready.

## DATA POINTS

**61.9%** and **57.9%**  
of 3rd grade students of 8th grade students  
score proficient or advanced in English Language Arts as measured by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

**56.0%** and **32.2%**  
of 3rd grade students of 8th grade students  
score proficient or advanced in math as measured by the PSSA.

Pennsylvania ranks  
**44<sup>TH</sup>** IN THE **NATION**  
in the state's share of education funding.

The share of CTE funding is  
**90% LOCAL,**  
**8% STATE** and  
**2% FEDERAL.**

## POLICY PRIORITIES:

- 1. Support increased investments in basic education funding as well as evaluate and recommend strategies to address and advance adequacy and equity.**
  - Support increased investments through the enacted basic education funding formula to ensure adequate and equitable support is provided to school districts.
  - Research and evaluate legislative considerations in response to the outcome of the public education lawsuit.
  - Develop and provide a formal advocacy position to the Basic Education Funding Commission on adequacy and equity in K-12 education.
  - Revise the per-student basic and special education charter and cyber charter school funding formulas to more accurately reflect the costs assumed by charter school entities to deliver services and incorporate weighted elements that better consider student characteristics.
- 2. Ensure adequate state funding for career and technical education (CTE) so that every child who is interested can participate.**
  - Continue to drive increased investments into the state CTE subsidy and equipment grant lines, including modifying current multipliers to fix the issue with the subsidy line being capped and fully funded.

- b. Research and develop a formal recommendation on including a CTE weight in the basic education funding formula ahead of the reconstitution of the commission.
- c. Advocate for increased disaggregated publicly available CTE data that is consumable and identifies future policy solutions.
- d. Modernize CTE curriculum to ensure that programming is meeting economic needs as a result of the pandemic.

**3. Continue to develop a comprehensive and transparent accountability framework for schools and their personnel.**

- a. Ensure the state’s academic standards continually provide a quality benchmark for defining student proficiency across all grade levels, support an assessment system that measures student growth, identifies adequacy gaps, and recognizes curriculum and instruction needs, preserve high school graduation requirements that ensure students are postsecondary and workforce ready regardless of where they graduate from in the commonwealth and ensure curriculum is aligned with the state’s proficiency benchmarks.
- b. Identify national metrics on 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math to identify policy solutions to improve the state’s outcomes in these measures.
- c. Continue to monitor the Future Ready Index and school profiles to ensure that school districts are improving performance and making progress in key areas, including an emphasis on student growth measures.
- d. Continue to oppose efforts to implement vouchers or education savings accounts, as these proposals are likely to further weaken the performance of already struggling schools.
- e. Research and explore the charter school system including governance and performance and accountability, both academic and fiscal.

**4. Ensure that students have the adequate supports to meet their special needs.**

- a. Ease the burden on local school districts covering special education costs by increasing the state share of special education funding back to approximately one-third of costs.

**LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY ACTION NEEDED TO ADVANCE POLICY PRIORITIES:**

- If the upcoming public education funding lawsuit determines that the current funding structure is unconstitutional, a legislative response will be required.
- Potential legislative action to address the currently capped Career and Technical Education Subsidy formula as well as around data reporting.
- PSSA and Keystone exams were not conducted in the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is anticipated that the Pennsylvania Department of Education will apply for another federal waiver for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Federal budget appropriations including Title I and IDEA, as well as the potential for additional federal stimulus dollars. State budget appropriations in basic education funding, career and technical education funding and special education funding.

**ACTIONS WE’RE WATCHING:**

- Anticipated decision on public education funding lawsuit (William Penn School District et al vs. Pennsylvania Department of Education et al).
- Basic Education Funding Commission is set to be reconstituted in 2022, with a report due in 2023.
- Special Education Funding Commission report again delayed to May 2021.

