

WHY LAWMAKERS MUST ENACT THE FUNDING FORMULA RECOMMENDED BY THE BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING COMMISSION

June 2015

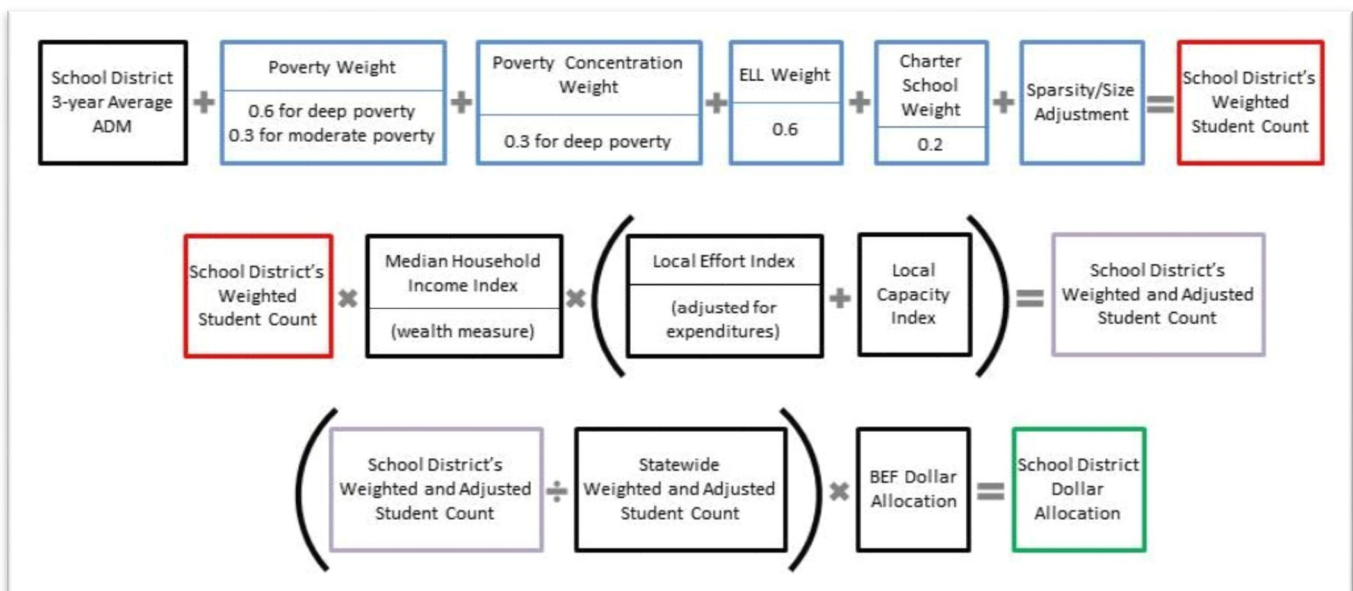
The way Pennsylvania funds its public schools isn't working for our students or taxpayers. That is because the state currently fails to consider the real costs necessary for children to meet state academic standards; and does not consistently use accurate, reliable, verifiable, and current school and community data to address factors that impact learning.

Pennsylvania is 1 of just 3 states that does not use a formula to allocate basic education funding to its public schools in a fair, predictable way.

Federal data shows Pennsylvania has the widest funding gap between wealthy and poor school districts of any state in the country. State and local per-pupil spending in our poorest districts is 33 percent less than in Pennsylvania's wealthiest districts - a disparity that can be remedied if we use a funding formula.

The bipartisan Basic Education Funding Commission has proposed a funding formula that would fairly distribute basic education investments based on several important factors, such as a school district's Average Daily Membership (ADM), the prevalence and degree of student poverty, the number of English Language Learners and charter school enrollment. It also accounts for district-based factors like median household incomes, population density, and local taxing effort.

BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING COMMISSION FORMULA



Pennsylvania needs this formula and we encourage the General Assembly and Governor to quickly enact it. Here's a look at how it works ...

- ***The Basic Education Funding Commission recommends ...***

The proposed formula should maintain fiscal 2014-15 state funding for all school districts so no district receives less than that amount as the formula is implemented.

- ***The formula distributes funding based on accurate student enrollment data ...***

The formula uses three years of Average Daily Membership (ADM) data to determine a district's student enrollment, which reliably reflects enrollment growth while also providing districts with declining enrollment time to adjust.

- ***The formula accounts for student poverty ...***

To account for the additional resources needed to educate students in lower-income households, the formula uses three weights to reflect for poverty, "acute or deep poverty," and districts that have large percentages of students in poverty.

- ***For rural or small school districts ...***

The formula considers a district's population density and size relative to Pennsylvania's other districts and makes a "sparsity/size" adjustment to account for the unique challenges these districts face.

- ***To address the differences in household incomes and the ability to generate local property tax among districts ...***

The formula measures a school district's local tax-related revenue and its median household income (compared to the statewide median) and makes an adjustment for excess spending based on a school district's current student expenditures.

- ***To address the resources needed to teach English Language Learners ...***

The formula recognizes the additional resources needed by students for whom English is a second language and provides additional resources based on the district's ELL enrollment.

- ***To address charter school enrollments ...***

The formula recognizes a district's charter school costs and makes a weighted adjustment to account for those costs.

The formula proposed by the Basic Education Funding Commission distributes funding in a manner that is equitable, predictable, and responsive to the ever-changing demographics of our public schools.

The Campaign for Fair Education Funding (fairfundingpa.org) is made up of more than 50 member organizations representing educators, labor, business leaders, faith-based organizations, child advocates, charter schools, and traditional public schools with representatives from rural, urban, and growing school districts.