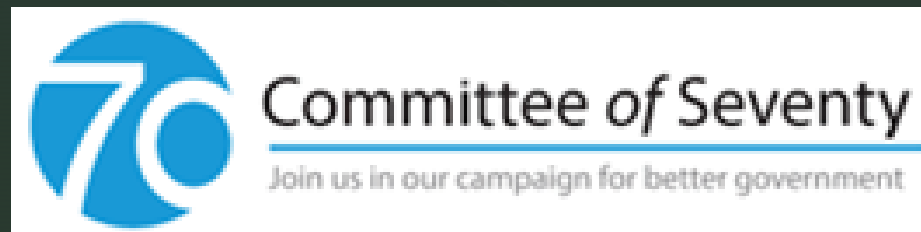


Dr. Myra Forrest

Focusing on the Inequities of Public School Funding in PA

Uniting for Action

Who are we and what do we hope to accomplish?



Why are we concerned about fairness in educational funding in PA?

Pennsylvania ranks at the **very bottom** of all 50 states in regard to giving additional funding to school districts in poverty.

We sent a letter and Case Study to all PA Senators, Representatives, Governor Wolf, Lt. Governor Fetterman, and Attorney General Josh Shapiro

Who signed the letter to Senators, members of the General Assembly, The Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General?

Alexzandra Battaglia, Data Analyst, Philadelphia SD

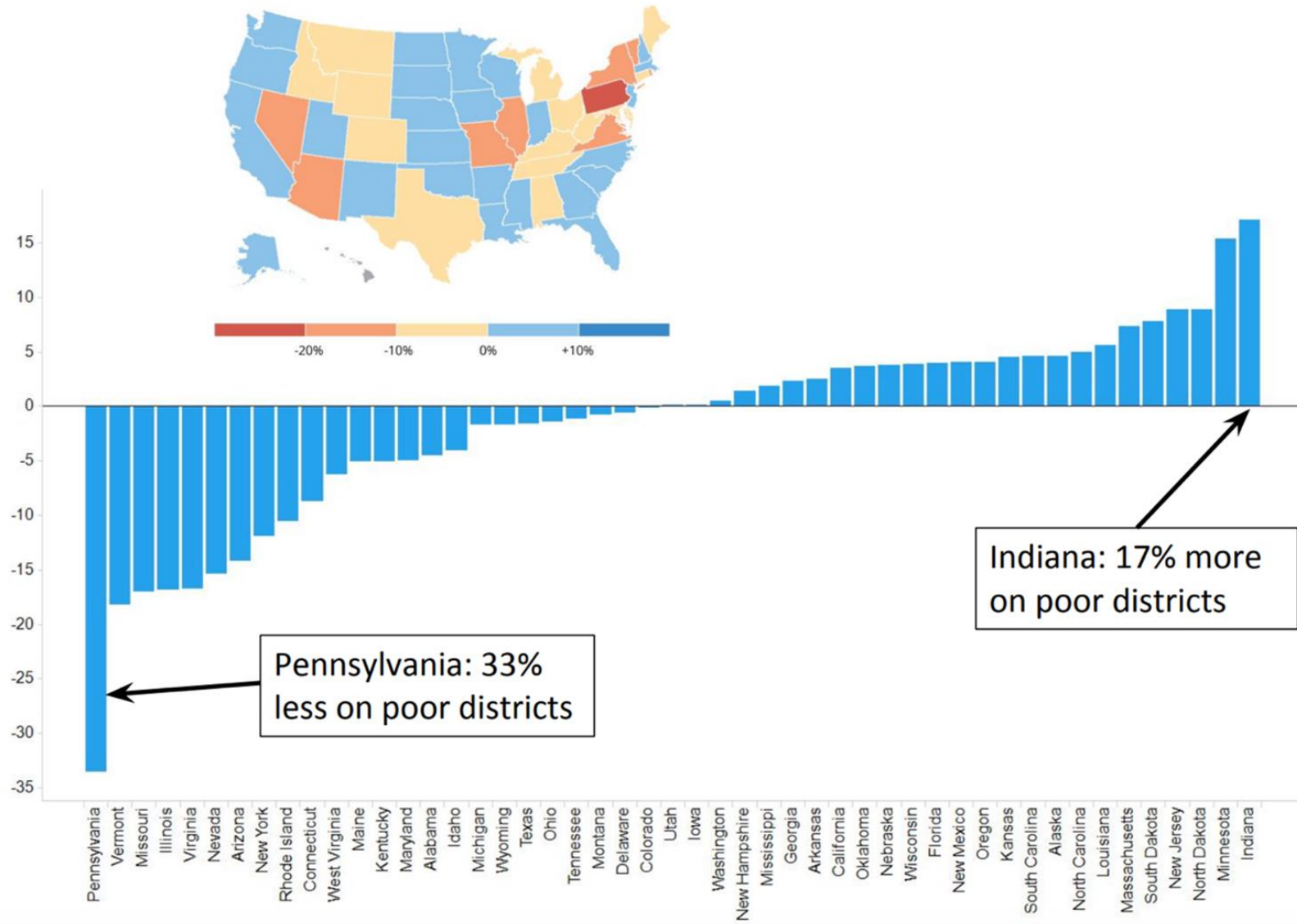
Tammy Bean, Community Engagement Professional, Norristown SD

Mark Chimel, School Board Director, Greencastle-Antrim SD

Dr. Myra Forrest, Education Advocate, Boyertown SD

Chris Wonders, East Stroudsburg Univ, Harrisburg SD

% Difference in Per Pupil State and Local Funding between High- and Low-Poverty Districts (2015)

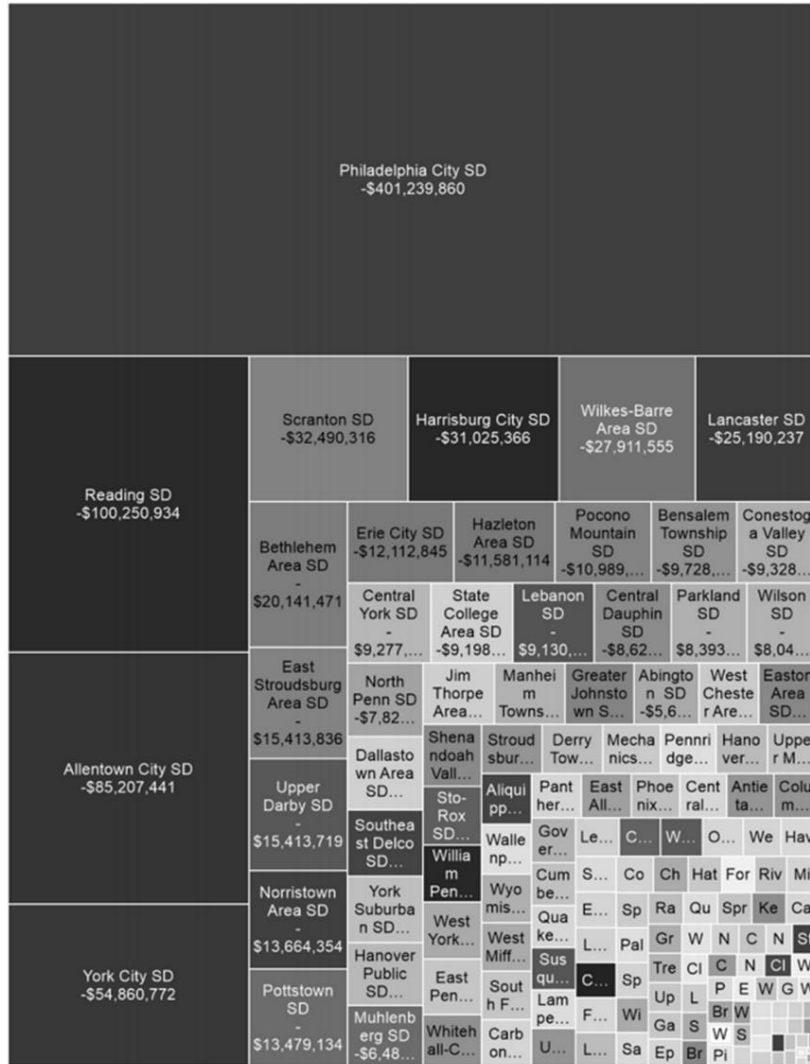


Graphs courtesy of The Washington Post and Huffington Post

Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics

2019-20 Inequity per District Color by Racial Makeup

Less than Fair Share



More than Fair Share



Graph courtesy of POWER Interfaith

Data Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2019

This inequity of funding shows clear racial bias:

- The whiter the district, with few exceptions, the more money PA state funding provides to the school district
- The more diverse the district, with few exceptions, the less money it receives from PA state funding

“Hold Harmless”

- What does “hold harmless” mean?
- Dates back to the early 1990’s
- Why is this concept harmful to many Pennsylvania school districts?

In 2016, a funding formula was created for PA, however, only NEW monies would be a party to that new formula.

- Most school districts were “Held Harmless,” no matter how overfunded the “Hold Harmless” districts were.
- Only 11% of current state “new” funding goes toward the new formula.
- 89% of the funds are distributed in the old, unfair way.

Pennsylvania is the only outlier
in all 50 states.

**PA is the only state providing the same amount of
funding as the previous school year.**

- If the student population has increased, the district will receive the same amount of money. (losing funding per student)
- If the student population has decreased, the district will receive the same amount of money. (gaining funding per student)

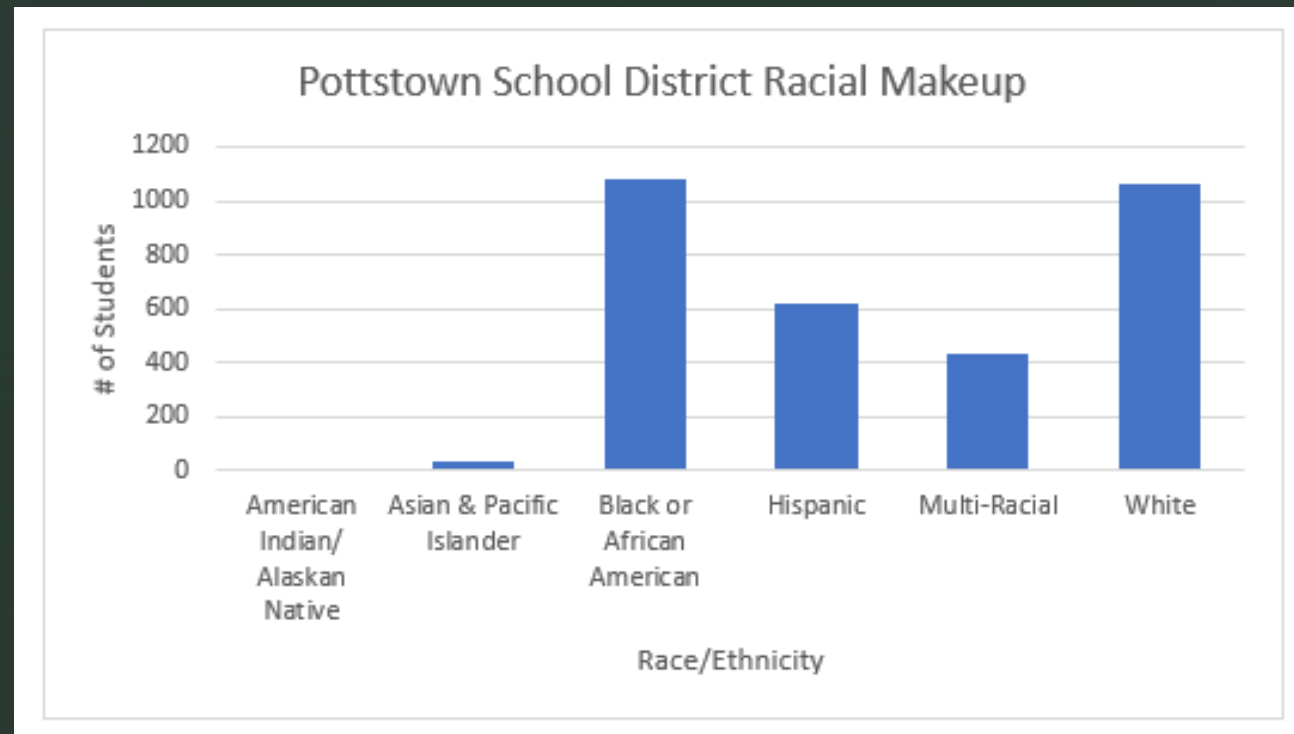
There is a high correlation among the following areas:

- Educational Attainment
- Health Outcomes
- Economic Achievement

How does this affect
▶ the Pottstown School
District?

➤ Racial Makeup of Pottstown School District, Showing the Racial Bias of the Funding Process

American Indian/Alaskan Native	5	0.15%
Asian & Pacific Islander	36	1.12.93%
Black or African American	1,081	33.37%
Hispanic	623	19.22%
Multi-Racial	435	13.43%
White	1,059	32.70%



- This extreme underfunding has made cuts in the
- programming of Pottstown School District such as:

- **No Elementary School Counselors**
- **No Middle School Foreign Language classes**
- **No intramural after school activities (athletic and non-athletic)**
- **No budget for school district sponsored field trips**
- **No budget for sending staff members to professional development seminars and conferences**
- **The Curriculum Budget for new educational materials has remained static for a decade**

This extreme underfunding has made cuts in the
▸ programming of Pottstown School District such as:

- **Transportation is limited to 5th grade students only**
- **Only 6 Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered at Pottstown High School**
- **Nurses and Librarians are shared between elementary schools, only 2.5 days at each school**
- **Limited number of sports teams for males and females, and coaching positions are limited due to lack of funds**
- **Facilities and equipment are out of date for academics (Ex. chemistry and physics labs, business and technology classes) and sports**
- **Pottstown has the lowest paid teachers and administrators in Montgomery County**

Example of Pottstown's serious educational issues due to the pandemic

- Pandemic started in mid March 2020 (students sent home on March 13)
- Wealthier school districts started virtual learning the very next week, March 16
- Pottstown School District was not fully on virtual learning until May 2020:
 - 1. Lack of computers
 - 2. Lack of internet connections in homes
 - 3. Lack of parental understanding of use of computers to help their children
 - 4. Young elementary students have had little training on how to use a computer

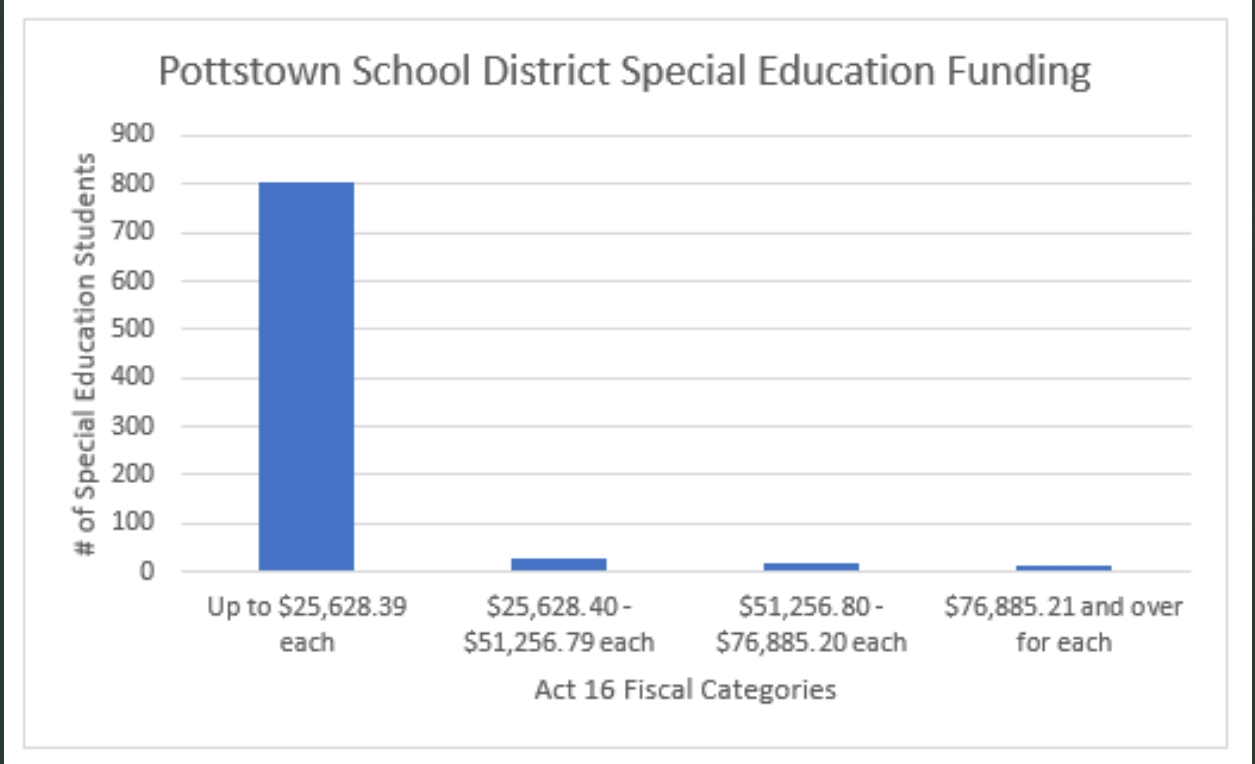
Pottstown School District has 100% of students receiving free breakfast and lunch because of extreme poverty levels

Pottstown meets the federal threshold for 100% free breakfast and lunch because more than 65% of the students in Pottstown are living in poverty.

Pottstown School District

- Special Education Funding

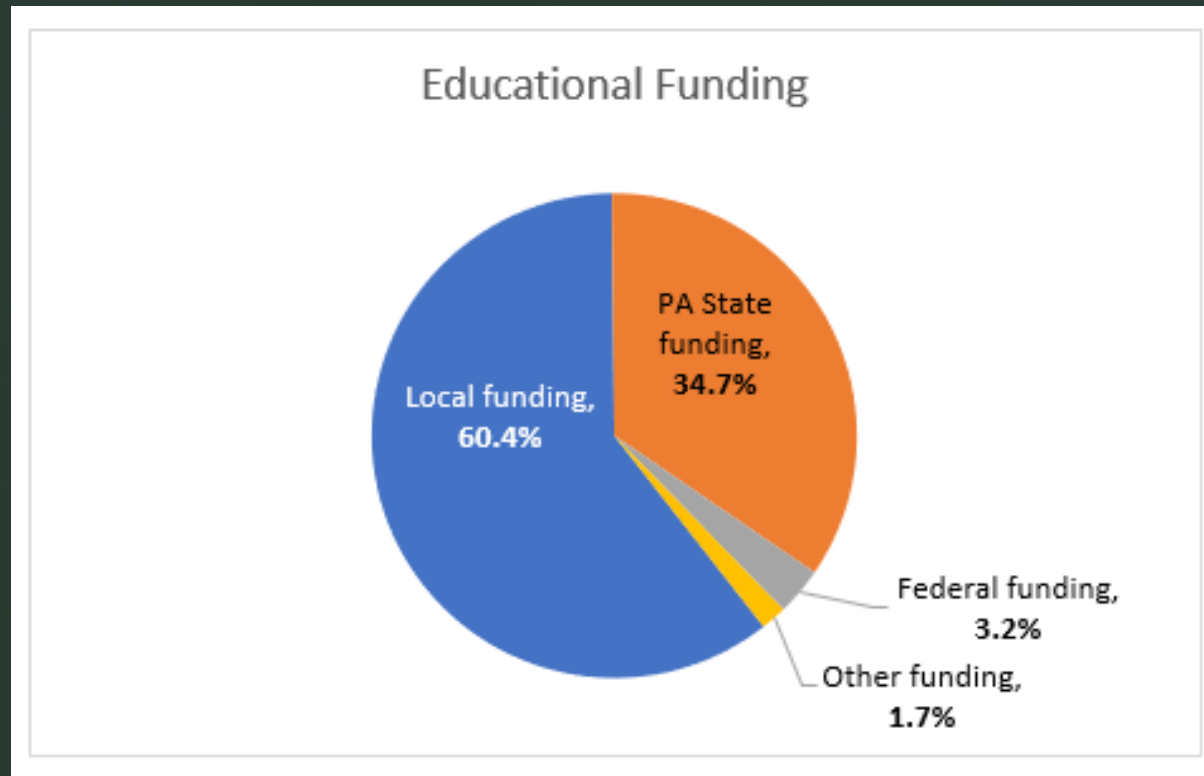
Up to \$25,628.39 each	802 students
\$25,628.40 - \$51,256.79 each	25 students
\$51,256.80 - \$76,885.20 each	19 students
\$76,885.21 and over for each	13 students



Data Source: Pottstown School District Special Education Department; School District Technology and Data Department

- Statistics on the sources of PA educational funding show the high % of local funding that PA legislators rely upon, on average.

Local funding	60.4%
PA State funding	34.7%
Federal funding	3.2%
Other funding	1.7%



Pottstown School District pays the tuition for 185 Cyber Charter and Charter School students

- Tuition for Charter Schools is based on an average developed by the state which unfairly inflates the tuition and greatly burdens all school districts (total for Pottstown School District: **\$3,238,353.65**)
- All schools now offer virtual learning options lessening the need for Cyber Charter Schools
- Charter Schools are FOR PROFIT and paid for through school district monies

Pottstown is a small, post-industrial town, having lost large businesses that provided excellent jobs and paid property taxes toward education

Examples:

- Bethlehem Steel Corporation
- Firestone Tire and Rubber Company
- Mrs. Smiths Pie Company
- Occidental Chemical Company
- Kiwi Shoe Polish Company

Pottstown is only 5.5 square miles.
Within the town, the following
organizations do not pay property
taxes:

- 60 churches
- The Hill School (a private college prep school)
- A non-profit hospital
- Montgomery County Community College
- Over 100 non-profit organizations

Pottstown Property Taxes are the 7th highest in the entire state of PA

- There are 500 school districts in the state
- 493 of them pay LOWER taxes than the residents of Pottstown
- Pottstown residents are highly overtaxed

Pottstown School District students and faculty need, and deserve, an equitable funding model to be totally implemented to level the playing field for our children.

EQUITY