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## **Statement on Governor Wolf's Budget Address**

*Deborah Gordon Klehr, executive director of the Education Law Center, issued this statement following Governor Tom Wolf's budget address today:*

"We support Governor Wolf's proposed increases in state funding for basic education, special education, early education, and career and technical education in next year's budget. Pennsylvania's students sorely need every dollar that the governor has proposed. But it will take much more significant investments, targeted to the most disadvantaged school districts, to close our state's longstanding resource gaps and fix its broken education funding system.

"The state needs to move with more urgency to allocate adequate dollars and address the gaps between more and less affluent districts. In 2012-13, the gap in per-pupil spending between a typical affluent district and a typical poor district in the state was \$3,058 per child. By 2016-17, it had grown to \$3,778 per child.

"Extreme funding gaps between more and less affluent school districts are a direct result of the state's low share of total education spending; Pennsylvania ranks 46th among states in the portion of school spending funded by the state, according to the latest available census data, making school funding heavily dependent on local wealth.

"We urge Harrisburg to do more to accelerate state aid to the state's most disadvantaged school districts. The legislature should earmark a portion of new funding to the most underfunded districts, identified on the basis of the state's existing fair funding formula.

"To chart a new course for the future, the governor and legislature must commit to substantial, sustained multiyear increases in basic education funding to close persistent adequacy and equity gaps. Meeting the needs of all students also requires increased funding to early education and special education.

"We will continue to work with the governor and the General Assembly to ensure that the state budget reflects Pennsylvanians' priorities and the needs of our students. We will also continue to pursue our court case, in which we challenge the failure of our state government officials to comply with their constitutional obligations to adequately and equitably fund our schools."

*For more information, contact Paul Socolar, 215-906-1250 or [psocolar@elc-pa.org](mailto:psocolar@elc-pa.org)*

The Education Law Center-PA (ELC) is a nonprofit, legal advocacy organization with offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. Through legal representation, impact litigation, trainings, and policy advocacy, ELC advances the rights of vulnerable children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ students, and children experiencing homelessness. For more information, visit [elc-pa.org](http://elc-pa.org) or follow on Twitter @edlawcenterpa.

**Ensuring that all of Pennsylvania's children have equal access to a quality public education.**