



Joint Statement from Education Law Center-PA and Public Interest Law Center on Gov. Shapiro's FY27 Budget Proposal

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(Feb. 3, 2026) All Pennsylvania children are entitled to a contemporary, effective, comprehensive public education. In his FY27 budget address today, Governor Shapiro proposed \$565 million to continue closing the school funding adequacy gap, issuing a clarion call to meet Pennsylvania's constitutional obligation to adequately fund public education. As the governor therefore recognized, state leaders must continue to respond to the Commonwealth Court's February 2023 decision declaring Pennsylvania's school funding system inequitable, inadequate, and unconstitutional.

Two things can be true. First, investments made thus far through the adequacy formula have already begun to deliver real benefits for students across the state, including providing full day kindergarten, expanding mental health programs, increasing afterschool tutoring, and improving access to STEM education and school libraries. The Governor's proposal to build on this progress and continue the path towards adequacy is critical. Second, despite these investments, schools today remain 3.8 billion dollars underfunded, and the current timeline for compliance is far too slow. Those children who have constantly borne the weight of this neglect – low-income children, children of color, and children with disabilities – will continue to absorb the consequences of that failure until this job is completed.

Moreover, the proposed savings from cyber charter reform (\$75 million), along with additional funds for Basic Education Funding (\$50 million) and Special Education Funding (\$50 million), are critical. But in the upcoming budget process, these investments and

savings must be increased to at least the rate of inflation to ensure the adequacy formula functions as intended and to avoid creating new underfunded districts in the process. Finally, investments must include sufficient funding needed to improve school facilities and expand access to high quality pre-K – both of which the court recognized as key components of a thorough and efficient system of public education.

The General Assembly must build on the governor’s proposal by addressing outstanding needs and accelerating the timeline to close the adequacy gap. A child’s time in school is precious, and Pennsylvania’s public school students cannot afford to keep waiting.

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*The **Public Interest Law Center** uses high-impact legal strategies to advance the civil, social, and economic rights of communities in the Philadelphia region facing discrimination, inequality, and poverty. We use litigation, community education, advocacy, and organizing to secure their access to fundamental resources and services in the areas of public education, housing, health care, employment, environmental justice and voting. For more information, visit www.pubintl.org or follow on X @PubIntLawCtr.*

*The **Education Law Center-PA (ELC-PA)** 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, community engagement, and policy advocacy, ELC-PA advances the rights of underserved children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQ+ youth, children experiencing homelessness, and children at the intersection of multiple underserved identities. For more information, visit elc-pa.org or @edlawcenterpa on X.*