



## **RESOLUTION of the PENNSYLVANIA COALITION of STUDENT SERVICES ASSOCIATIONS**

**Whereas** Pennsylvania’s Commonwealth Court, on February 7, 2023, found that our current system for funding public schools is unconstitutional, failing to fulfill the Pennsylvania constitution’s promise of a “thorough and efficient system of public education” — responding to a lawsuit filed by six school districts, the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, and parents; and

**Whereas** the court found that education is a “fundamental right;” and

**Whereas** the court found that school districts “which struggle to raise enough revenue through local taxes to cover the needs of their students lack the inputs that are essential elements of a thorough and efficient system of public education – adequate funding; courses, curricula, and other programs that prepare students to be college and career ready; sufficient, qualified, and effective staff; safe and adequate facilities; and modern, quality instrumentalities of learning;” and

**Whereas** the court found “that money does matter, and economically-disadvantaged students and historically underperforming students can overcome challenges if they have access to the right resources that wealthier districts are financially able to provide;” and

**Whereas** the Basic Education Funding Commission, a panel of legislators and executive branch designees, found that Pennsylvania school districts are collectively underfunded by \$5.4 billion and proposed that the state should provide \$5.1 billion to close this gap in seven years, plus an additional \$956 million tax equity supplement over seven years for communities that have faced the steepest local tax burdens; and

**Whereas** Governor Shapiro’s 2024-25 budget endorses the work of the commission and fulfills the first year of the commission’s seven-year plan with a \$1.1 billion increase in basic education funding, with most of this funding targeted to public schools that have been shortchanged by the current unconstitutional system in the small towns, suburbs, and cities where students have been the most deeply underfunded; and

**Whereas** the Governor’s budget stands up for our students by putting forward the first step of a transformative plan for the state to deliver on its responsibility to fully fund public schools in Pennsylvania based on what children need to succeed, so that students all students, regardless of zip code and community wealth, have meaningful opportunities; and

**Whereas** the court directed the General Assembly and the Governor to enact a plan to address the constitutional deficiencies identified in its opinion, which would include all seven years of funding called for by the Basic Education Funding Commission; and

**Whereas** all school districts will materially benefit from the Governor's proposal and adoption of a plan to provide for it to continue for seven years until the funding deficiencies identified by the commission are overcome; and

**Whereas** every community should have enough funding to serve their students, regardless of wealth; and

**Whereas** underfunding is a statewide problem in Pennsylvania public schools, and only statewide action can reduce the deep disparities in educational resources that define our school funding system; and

**Whereas** the use of year-to-year grants have been used to support student mental health, which in the place of stable and predictable funding have encouraged the hiring of contracted staff and services instead of school-employed, certified student services professionals, and

**Whereas** the time is now to take action, for our children and for Pennsylvania's future; therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the PENNSYLVANIA COALITION of STUDENT SERVICES ASSOCIATIONS (PACSSA) urges the General Assembly to adopt Governor Shapiro's historic state budget proposal and to pass legislation making the necessary multi-year commitment to address Pennsylvania's entire constitutional and moral obligation to fully and fairly fund public schools; and

**Further resolved**, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the governor's office, to the Secretary of Education, and to Speaker Joanna McClinton, House Majority Leader Matthew Bradford, and House Minority Leader Bryan Cutler, as well as all members of the House of Representatives, and to Senate President Pro Tempore Kim Ward, Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman, and Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa, as well as all members of the Senate.



*Emilia Mattucci*  
Ms. Emilia Mattucci  
Executive Director  
Pennsylvania School Counselors Association



*At Olt*  
Dr. Adam Oldham, LPC, NCSC  
President, School Counselor Section  
PSEA Department of Pupil Services



*Michelle Sholder, LSW, M.Ed*  
Mrs. Michelle Sholder, MSW, LSW  
President  
PSEA Department of Pupil Services



*Anne-Marie Crawford, MSN, RN, NCSN*  
Mrs. Anne-Marie Crawford, MSN, RN, NCSN  
President  
Pennsylvania Association  
of School Nurses and Practitioners



*Wendy B. Robison*  
Mrs. Wendy Robison, RN, BSN, NCSN, MSN,  
FNP-BC President, School Nurses Section  
PSEA Department of Pupil Services



*Michael McGaughey, Sr.*  
Mr. Michael McGaughey  
President and CEO  
Pennsylvania Association  
of Student Assistance Professionals



*Amber M. Sessoms, NCSP*  
Dr. Amber M. Sessoms, NCSP  
President  
Association of School Psychologists  
of Pennsylvania



*David Lillenstein, NCSP*  
Dr. David Lillenstein, NCSP  
President, School Psychologist Section  
PSEA Department of Pupil Services



*Doug Arnold*  
Dr. Doug Arnold  
Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Association  
of Pupil Services Administrators



*Lindsay Knepp, LSW*  
Mrs. Lindsay Knepp, LSW  
President  
Pennsylvania Association  
of School Social Work Personnel



*Angelina Romano*  
Ms. Angelina Romano, MSW, LCSW  
President, School Social Worker Section  
PSEA Department of Pupil Services



*Matthew Ammons*  
Mr. Matthew Ammons  
President  
Pennsylvania Association  
of Pupil Services Administrators