|  |
| --- |
| **LAPP Bulletin** |
| **Date**: February 9, 2023 |
| **Subject**: ***PA Public School Funding Court Case*** |
| **Context:**  Education is a Public Policy Priority of the Pennsylvania branch of AAUW with the objective of supporting a quality system of public education. On February 7, the PA Commonwealth Court ruled that the state’s current school funding system is unconstitutional.  **Summary**  This ruling is a huge win for students across the Commonwealth.  The case was first filed in 2014 and went to trial in November of 2021. Pennsylvania's current school funding system (in which the majority of funding is provided through property taxes) denies students in low wealth and low-income school districts the quality public education that they deserve and that is guaranteed by the Pennsylvania constitution.  It will be up to the Legislature and Governor to devise a new more equitable funding system that provides ALL students with the resources they need.  Here is the key language of the ruling:  NOW, February 7, 2023, following trial in this matter, Petitioners’ Petition for Review is GRANTED. The Court DECLARES as follows:  1. The Education Clause, article III, section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, requires that every student receive a meaningful opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and civically, which requires that all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education;  2. Respondents have not fulfilled their obligations to all children under the Education Clause in violation of the rights of Petitioners;  3. Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution to all school-age children residing in the Commonwealth;  4. Article III, section 32 of the Pennsylvania Constitution imposes upon Respondents an obligation to provide a system of public education that does not discriminate against students based on the level of income and value of taxable property in their school districts;  5. Students who reside in school districts with low property values and incomes are deprived of the same opportunities and resources as students who reside in school districts with high property values and incomes;  6. The disparity among school districts with high property values and incomes and school districts with low property values and incomes is not justified by any compelling government interest nor is it rationally related to any legitimate government objective; and  7. As a result of these disparities, Petitioners and students attending low wealth districts are being deprived of equal protection of law. |
| **What You Can Do**:   1. Contact your state representative, state senator and the Governor’s office to let them know you expect them to address the unconstitutional funding system equitably and as soon as possible. 2. Contact your Pennsylvania family, friends and neighbors and ask them to the same! |
| **For More Information on This Issue**:  Read the text of the full decision [HERE](about:blank) |