

JUNE 2026

**The Impact of
Pennsylvania's Adequacy
Supplement**



Introduction

School districts across Pennsylvania depend on state and local funding to offer world-class educational opportunities to their students. Some school districts have greater capacity to make good on that commitment because their local funding, together with state resources, is sufficient to meet their students' needs. But most Pennsylvania school districts cannot generate enough local revenue to provide every student with a high-quality education.

That's the core reason the Commonwealth Court ruled in *William Penn School District et al. v. Pennsylvania Department of Education* that Pennsylvania's state system for funding public K-12 education violated the Pennsylvania Constitution's Education Clause and Equal Protection Clause.

Based on the court decision, the Pennsylvania legislature wisely adopted a new funding mechanism to boost state funding for low-wealth districts known as the "adequacy supplement." The inaugural \$494 million tranche of the adequacy supplement, distributed via the Ready to Learn Block Grant, was included in the 2024-25 budget. These funds were distributed to 348 schools educating 1,494,950 students, or 88% of all students in Pennsylvania.

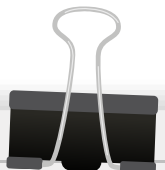
The ambitious work of state lawmakers to appropriate the adequacy funds and give schools the flexibility to use the resources as needed has been matched by enthusiasm from local school leaders, who have deployed the funds strategically to address their students' needs. In addition to students who are the clear beneficiaries of the state support for the adequacy resources, local taxpayers also benefit. The adequacy funds decrease the pressure on local property taxes, especially in communities where the local tax burden is already causing disinvestment and creating untenable burdens on low-wealth households. These local tax challenges are especially pronounced in rural communities, older suburbs, and smaller cities across the state.

Interviews with more than 40 superintendents demonstrate that this new state policy has widespread appreciation among rural, suburban, and urban districts. The results of these interviews are included in this report and provide tangible evidence of improvements in schools and students' achievement. Moreover, school leaders are grateful that lawmakers worked in a bipartisan manner to adopt a plan that, with each successive investment in adequacy funding, will enable schools to prepare every student to graduate ready for their next steps. These investments build the most critical resource of the state's economy – the future workforce. They also ensure that every community can have the confidence that its local schools can be the pathway to economic opportunity for every student.



"We are seeing students better prepared academically and behaviorally, with improved attendance, performance, and confidence. These resources are transformative for our district, ensuring all students have access to the supports and high-quality instruction they need to succeed."

- Superintendent Mike Vuckovich, Windber Area School District, Somerset County



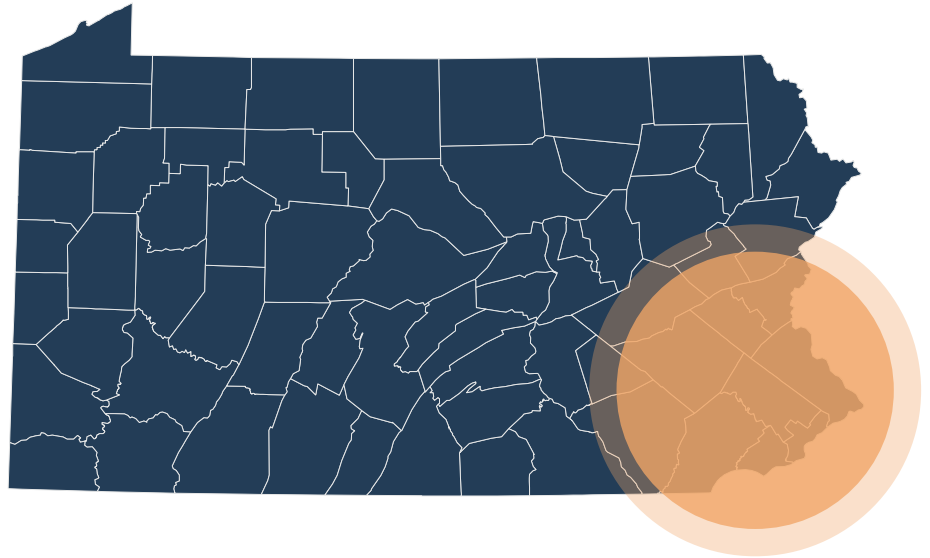
"We used adequacy funding to hire people our students desperately needed: an elementary science teacher, a social worker, a guidance counselor, and a special education teacher to support our most vulnerable learners. These positions made an immediate difference. Kids got help they weren't getting before. Teachers finally had support. Families felt heard. Adequacy funding is changing the lives of students. We see a daily impact. Adequacy funding isn't extra. It's essential."

– Superintendent Dave McAndrew,
Panther Valley School District,
Carbon and Schuylkill Counties



SOUTHEAST

"I returned in 2024 as a librarian to reopen five elementary school libraries, all of which were closed and basically turned into offices and other uses, and the students were not using the resources that were there. Some of the resources we lost through all the shuffling. So, when we got the Ready to Learn grant, that was a huge boost, we were able to buy books and a lot of other things that we need to reopen the libraries, including some furniture.



"Children come to the library now thinking it's Christmas. It's great. I mean, to see their faces! We've hired two new librarians. I'm just so happy we're moving in the right direction."

- Librarian John Auberzinsky, Coatesville Area School District, Chester County

"Ready to Learn investments have supported full-day kindergarten and English as a second language (ESL) support for the Avon Grove School District. Approximately 12 percent of the student population needs ESL, and these investments have allowed the school district to fund full time staff in ESL classrooms, which includes instructional specialists for students who need extra academic and/or behavioral support.

"As a result, Avon Grove has seen a change in test scores, with the average being more than a year's growth. Being able to provide a strong curriculum, combined with the targeted instructional specialists would not be possible without block grant funding."

- Superintendent Dr. Scott DeShong, Avon Grove School District, Chester County

"The learning and physical environment of Pottstown School District has changed in the right direction due to the Ready to Learn investments in the district. Additional funding has allowed the district to expand academic performance of students through internet technology like utilization of devices in the classroom, and access to software programs that enhance the education they receive. These funds are used to maintain career and technical education to grades 10-12 who are preparing to move into highly needed trade jobs. As a result of these investments, the school district's climate has changed. Pottstown School District is seeing fewer physical altercations at the middle and high schools, higher attendance, and they are seeing the achievement gap get smaller and smaller. On the staff side, retention has been higher than it's ever been. The school district needs continuous funding to keep the momentum of improvements made by RTL investments."

- Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez, Pottstown School District, Montgomery County

SOUTHWEST

"Adequacy funding allows the Westmont Hilltop School District to provide students with things like full-day kindergarten, rigorous AP courses, and equipment for STEM education—all of which could be on the cutting block if state funding were not there to fill the gaps.

"In addition, the district is able to support more than 100 students each year at the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center. Supporting students who choose to attend the Career Tech Center is expensive, amounting to about \$1 million each year in Westmont Hilltop's budget. Without the adequacy funding, our district would need to look to cut costs in other areas of our budget in order to meet student demand for these programs.

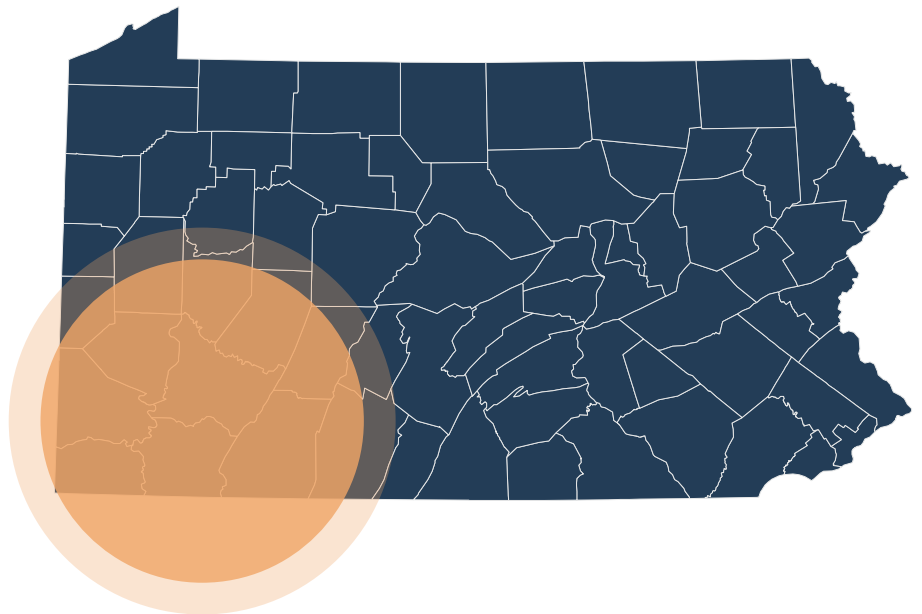
"The funds for us have been a lifeline. We're able to do a better job of educating our kids and making sure they're pursuing something that they're interested in."

- Superintendent Thomas Mitchell, Westmont Hilltop School District, Cambria County

"As a result of the new RTL Adequacy funding, Everett Area School District has seen positive shifts in student engagement, school climate, and staff capacity. Updated instructional materials and expanded student supports have improved classroom consistency and reduced barriers to learning, particularly for students with higher needs. Teachers report being better equipped to meet diverse learning needs with appropriate resources and staffing, which has led to calmer classrooms, stronger instructional focus, and more time spent on teaching rather than managing gaps in materials or support services.

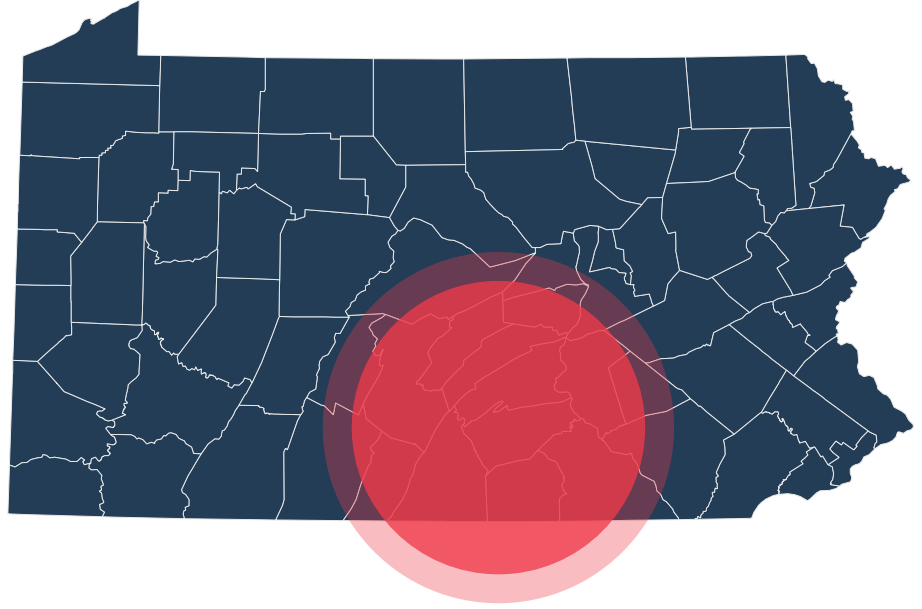
"For rural districts like ours, adequacy funding is not abstract policy—it translates directly into resources in classrooms. This funding is helping us provide a more equitable educational experience for our students, and it represents meaningful progress toward closing long-standing funding gaps. In the sea of inadequacy of public education funding, these additional dollars are the life-preserver being thrown to rural school districts like ours, enabling us to survive."

- Superintendent David Burkett, Everett Area School District, Bedford County



SOUTHCENTRAL

"In the Shippensburg Area School District, we are using adequacy funding to support the salaries and benefits of 12 full-day kindergarten teachers. Without this funding, the district would be forced to look at potentially cutting kindergarten back to half days. In addition, we are using adequacy dollars to pay for the salaries and benefits of two teachers who support our English language learners and to purchase a new English language arts curriculum for our K-8 students.



"Adequacy funding is also allowing Shippensburg to begin filling a gap in career and technical education opportunities in our district. This year, 137 students applied to programs at the Franklin County Career Tech Center. However, fewer than 70 slots are available for students attending our district schools. Adequacy funding will allow Shippensburg to add four welding bays to our high school and establish a welding class to allow students to explore this career. Moving forward, we will continue to pursue creating additional career and technical education opportunities on our campus to help ensure every student graduates with a plan for their future."

- Superintendent Bill August, Shippensburg Area School District, Cumberland and Franklin Counties

"The Chambersburg Area School District has used adequacy funding to add essential staff in counseling to reduce counselor: student ratios from 1:500 to 1:300. We have added four intervention specialists and invested one million dollars in ensuring all K-3 teachers receive the best Science of Reading training. We have created a District Education Center to serve out-of-school suspended students, transition students between school and placements, and flex high for students needing credit recovery. We have also hired a team to ensure all students will participate in an internship of 120 hours or pass four college courses while in high school.

"We have experienced decreased dropout rates in high school, a 40% reduction in high school discipline, and a rebuilding of our school climate in grades 9-12. Elementary schools have seen increases in students accessing counselors and outside agency appointments. In kindergarten and first grade, reading performance increased on average by 10% for schools using best practices and tier 2 interventions of Walk to Read and What I Need Now.

"Adequacy funding is life changing for students and families in our community. We are on the verge of providing the same quality programs of our wealthier neighbors even with a more disadvantaged population. This is the most challenging and rewarding work I have done in my 29-year educational career."

- Superintendent Chris Bigger, Chambersburg Area School District, Franklin County

NORTHEAST

"Old Forge School District has taken a precision-focused approach by identifying specific areas of need in English Language Arts, structured literacy, math, math literacy, and science, and aligning resources accordingly. By concentrating on targeted programs that address skill gaps, the district is seeing measurable upward trends in student performance."

"One of the clearest indicators of this progress is a nearly 20-point increase in the high school's building score. Once among the lowest in the region, Old Forge's high school now ranks among the highest in the region according to the state's accountability measures, which include achievement, growth, graduation rates, and attendance."

"Even before the adequacy formula began delivering additional funds, Old Forge had established a data team composed of teachers, counselors, and administrators. With the added flexibility provided through adequacy funding, the district expanded this work in meaningful ways. The district is now able to compensate educators for dedicated additional time for analyzing assessment data, identifying skill gaps, and designing targeted instructional responses to meet student needs."

"This funding allows us to say, 'Yes, this is the right resource for our students,' shifting the conversation from affordability to effectiveness."

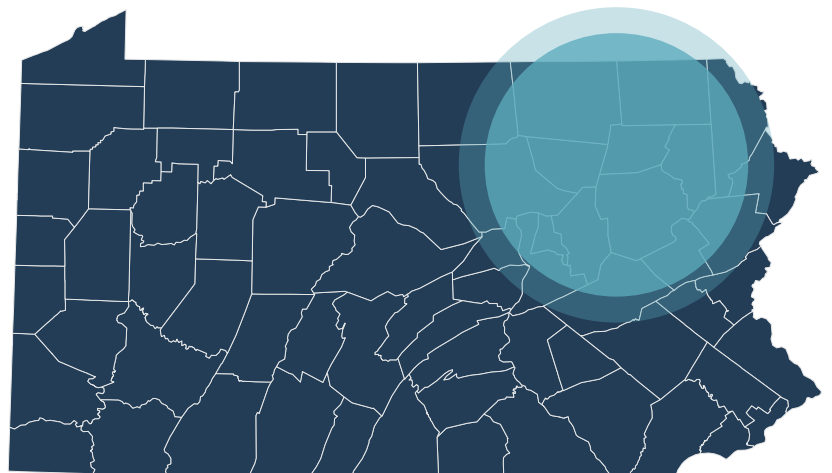
- Superintendent Christopher Gatto, Old Forge School District, Lackawanna County

"In Lehighton, we have been able to retain our level of staffing and reallocate positions within in order to create smaller class sizes in grade Kindergarten through 5th. This changed average elementary class sizes from around 26 to 20. We have been able to provide a social worker in every one of our buildings to help support our students emotionally and support our district's families in securing resources needed for well-being, and we have been able to utilize funding responsibly to invest in high quality curricular resources and assessment tools to help inform all of our instructional decision making."

"During the 2024-2025 school year, first grade experienced a 19% decrease in benchmark performance from fall to winter. This year, in 2025-2026, from Beginning of Year (BOY) to Middle of Year (MOY), we saw a 1% increase instead. In practical terms, this means that nearly one out of every five first-grade students who began the year below benchmark is now reading on grade level or significantly closer to it."

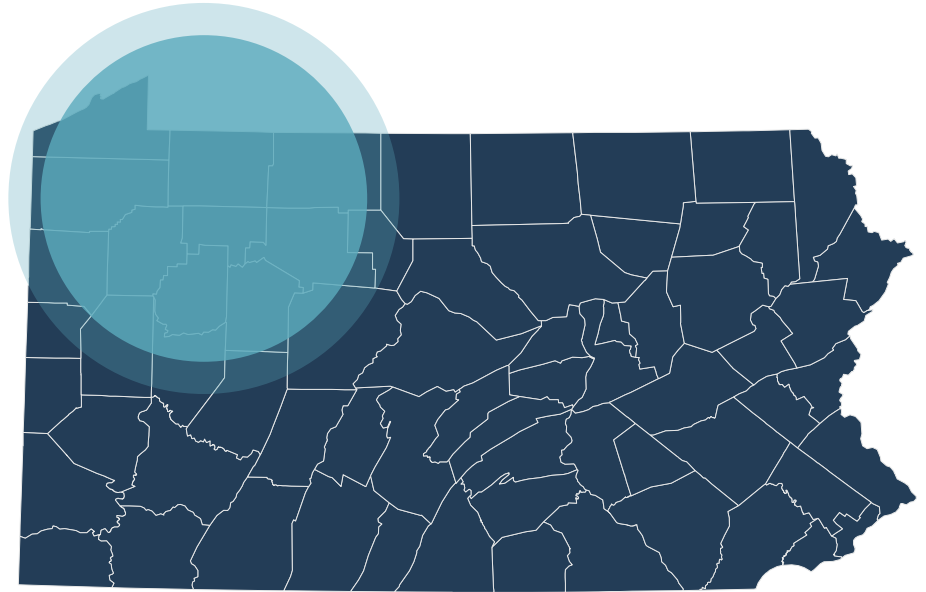
"Resources that are available to us because of the last two years' adequacy funding have helped us to show remarkable academic progress in this short amount of time—both in early literacy and also in mathematics."

- Principal of Academic Intervention and Achievement Tricia Foster, Lehighton School District, Carbon County



NORTHWEST

"Our use of the Ready to Learn (RTL) Block Grant is strategically focused on strengthening instruction, maintaining stability, and supporting the whole child across our school community. By prioritizing early learning through full-day kindergarten and class size reduction, the district builds a strong academic foundation for students, while maintaining key staffing positions and continuity of high-quality instruction. Investments in evidence-based curriculum, educational software, tutoring, intervention services, and summer school help close learning gaps and provide targeted support for students at all levels.



"RTL funds also support STEM education, career readiness, and industry-recognized certifications, preparing students for success beyond graduation. Professional development, tuition reimbursement, and staff incentives help attract, retain, and grow effective educators to our rural district, directly benefiting student learning. In addition, counseling services, mental health supports, special education staffing, and services for students experiencing educational instability ensure that academic progress is supported by strong social, emotional, and behavioral foundations.

"Student attendance is improving in all three buildings. There are fewer safety concerns related to behaviors and state reportable incidents declined by 20% last year. Faculty have shared that things are 'the best they have been' in the district in a very long time. Teacher turnover has slowed down with only one teacher hire needed in 24-25, and we are seeing more interest in open positions."

- Superintendent Jeannine Kloss, Kane Area School District, McKean and Elk Counties

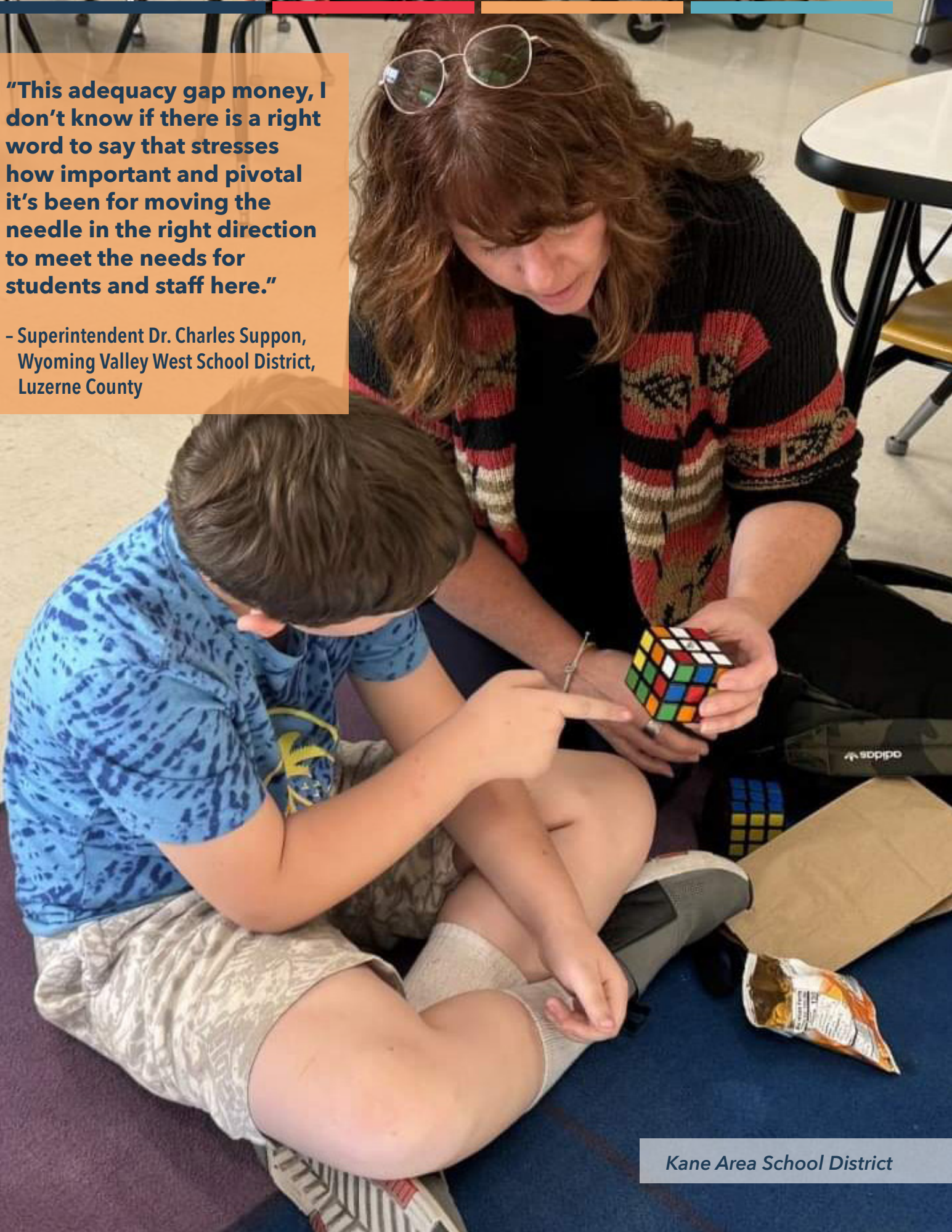
"In the Otto-Eldred School District we used adequacy funding to maintain full day Kindergarten for all students and to fund library services. Kindergarten is seeing significant benefits to smaller class size especially related to literacy. Using Acadience Benchmark data, students at or above benchmark in reading doubled from fall to winter to 78% and math increased by 30%.

"As a district that relies on the state for almost 80% of our funding, Adequacy Funds are critical in our planning."

- Superintendent Matthew Splain, Otto-Eldred School District, McKean County

"This adequacy gap money, I don't know if there is a right word to say that stresses how important and pivotal it's been for moving the needle in the right direction to meet the needs for students and staff here."

**- Superintendent Dr. Charles Suppon,
Wyoming Valley West School District,
Luzerne County**



A Statewide Snapshot of Adequacy Funding

Of the 500 school districts in the Commonwealth, 348 received adequacy supplement funding for SY 25. Among the state's districts, adequacy funds went to:

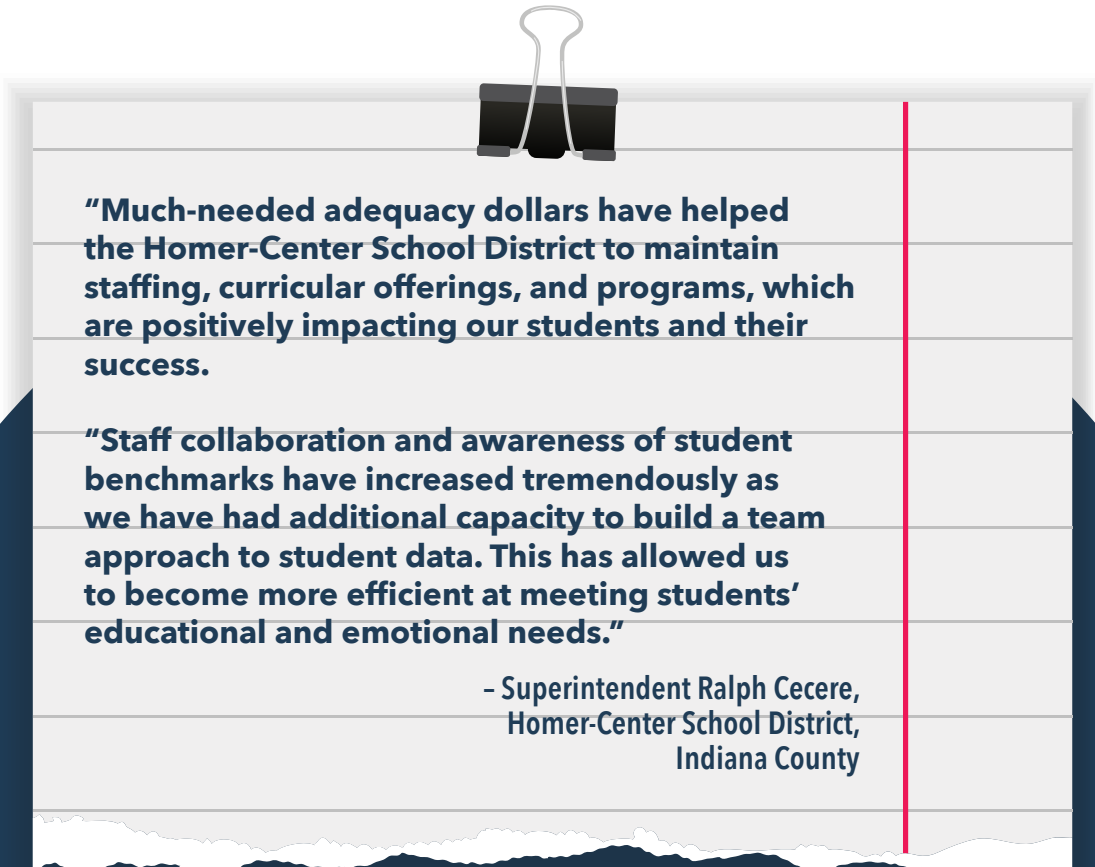
181 rural school districts educating **355,173** students

149 suburban school districts educating **620,403** students

18 urban school districts educating **519,373** students

School districts are required to report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on how they allocated their adequacy funding among 26 allowable uses. The data from these reports show consistency in how they spent the funds across the types of school districts – rural, suburban, and urban. There were, however, exceptions: rural and suburban districts were more likely to spend their funds on class-size reduction than urban districts. Suburban districts were more likely than rural or urban districts to invest in student supports.

Among the 26 allowable uses of these funds, districts spent 87% on eight categories.

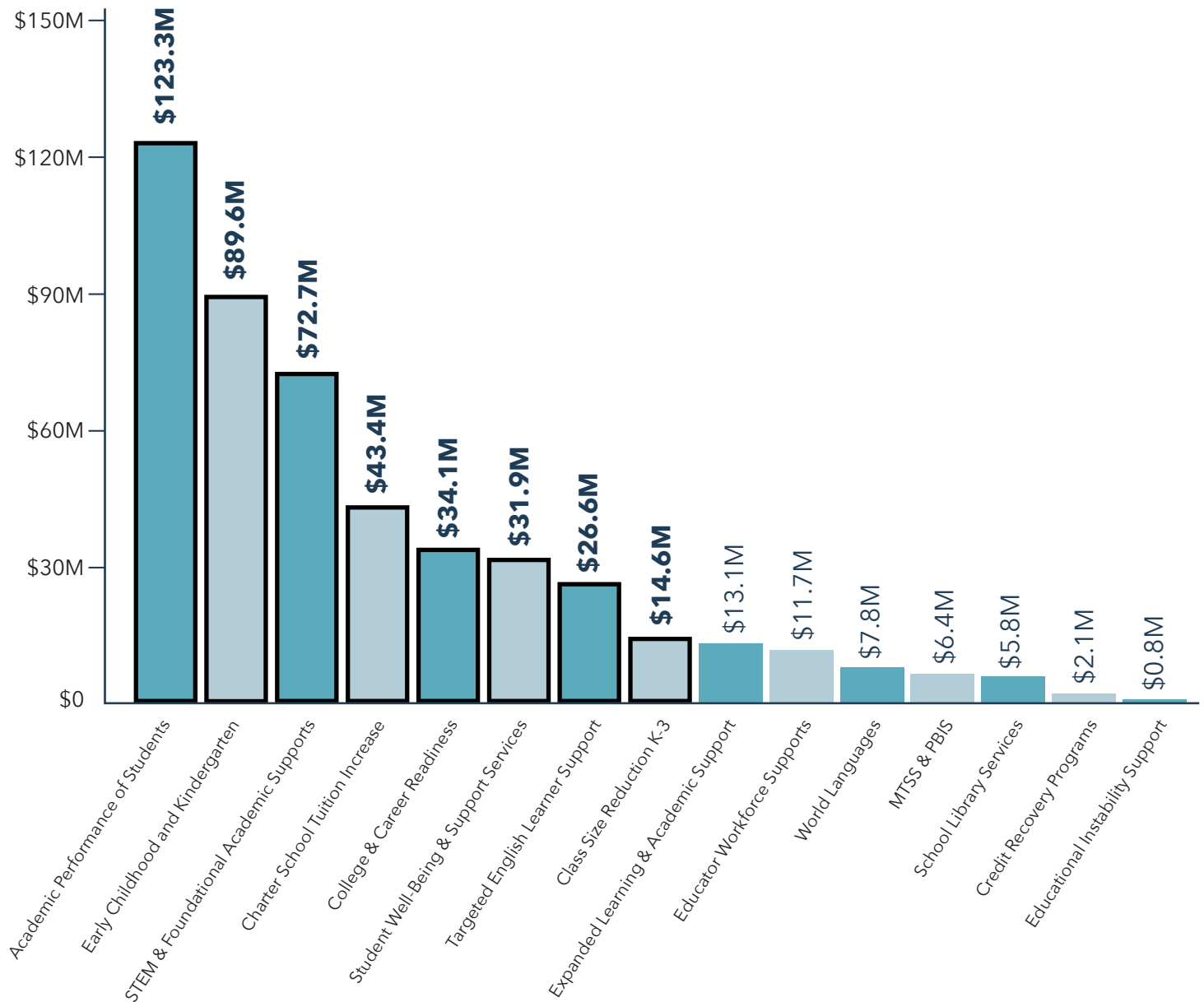


"Much-needed adequacy dollars have helped the Homer-Center School District to maintain staffing, curricular offerings, and programs, which are positively impacting our students and their success."

"Staff collaboration and awareness of student benchmarks have increased tremendously as we have had additional capacity to build a team approach to student data. This has allowed us to become more efficient at meeting students' educational and emotional needs."

**- Superintendent Ralph Cecere,
Homer-Center School District,
Indiana County**

Eight Categories of Spending Account for 87% of Adequacy Funding



Districts spent 26% of the funds on activities classified as “Academic Performance of Students.” The total of these investments was about \$123 million, and districts that focused on these services spent, on average, about \$218 per student. Although the category does not specify every exact use, it generally appears to capture funding directed toward broad academic improvement and instructional support.

Another category of spending permitted districts to cover the rising costs of cyber and brick-and-mortar charter school payments. Eighty-five districts used \$43 million for this purpose, with an average cost of \$144 per student.

A Deep Dive Into District Adequacy Spending

In addition to these two general categories of spending, this report examines five specific uses of the funds accounting for 47.4% of adequacy spending:

1 Early Childhood and Kindergarten

2 STEM and Foundational Academic Supports

3 College and Career Readiness

4 Student Well-being and Support Services

5 Class Size Reduction K-3

For ease of presentation, some related categories were combined into broader buckets, while others were retained as standalone categories so that taxpayers and policymakers can gain an understanding of how districts prioritized the use of the funds. This report presents spending on a per-student basis so that apples-to-apples comparisons can be made among school districts.



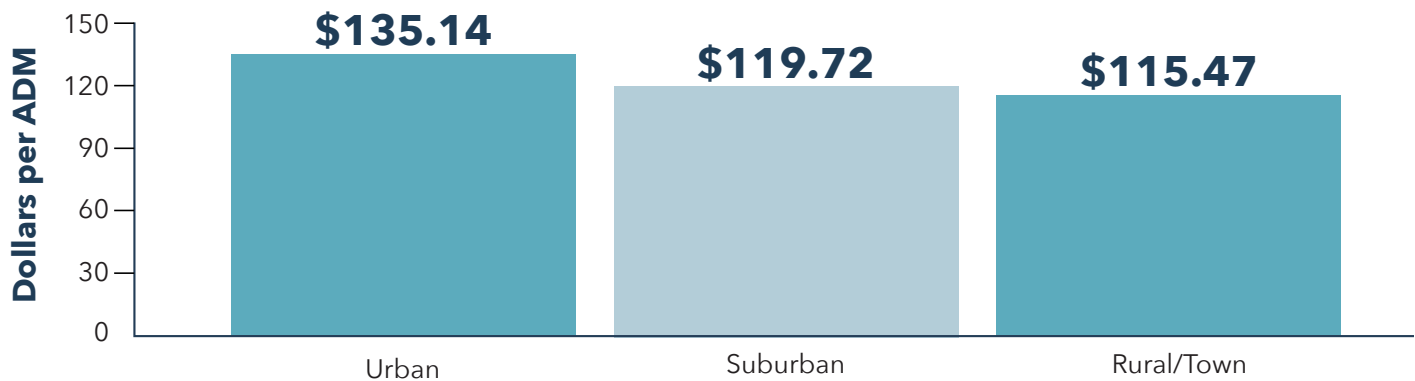
Early Childhood and Kindergarten

Among the five specific investment categories, districts invested the most in Early Childhood and Kindergarten, with 216 districts, or 62% of districts, reporting spending nearly \$90 million on this purpose. Statewide, that amounted to 19% of all reported adequacy dollars and \$122 per ADM among reporting districts. Rural, suburban, and urban districts each substantially focused their funding on these early learning interventions.

"Adequacy funding has been critical in maintaining our age 4 Pre-K program. It provides stability for our district and ensures that all students, regardless of background, have access to high-quality early learning experiences."

– Superintendent Matthew Button,
Blue Ridge School District,
Susquehanna County

Adequacy Funding Accounted for an Additional \$122 per ADM for Early Learning and Full Day Kindergarten



"We have observed clear improvements in early literacy readiness, student engagement, and overall school climate as a result of maintaining full-day kindergarten."

– Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Rizzo-Saunders,
Kennett Consolidated School District,
Chester County



Avon Grove Area School District

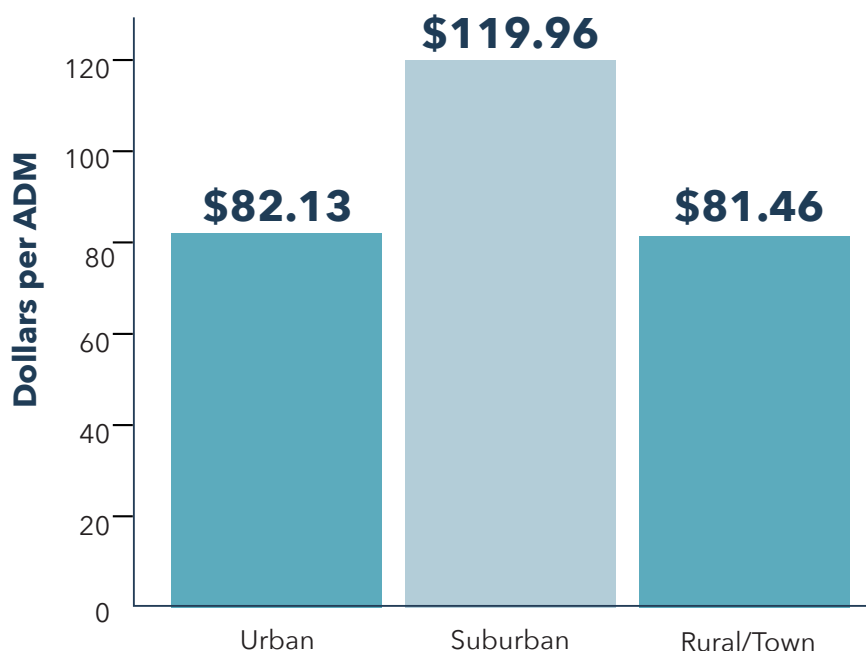
STEM and Foundational Academic Supports

Districts reported sizable investments of adequacy funding for science, technology, engineering, math, applied knowledge, math and literacy, and structured literacy programs. Overall, 115 districts, or 33% of adequacy districts spent \$73 million on these services. Statewide, that equaled 15% of all adequacy spending and \$94 per student. Rural, suburban, and urban districts each substantially focused their funding on STEM and Foundational Supports.

"If we didn't have adequacy funding, bringing STEM education to the primary grades would never be possible."

-Superintendent Dr. Erin Keating,
Scranton School District,
Lackawanna County

Adequacy Funding Accounted for an Additional \$94 per ADM for STEM and Foundational Supports



Shippensburg Area School District

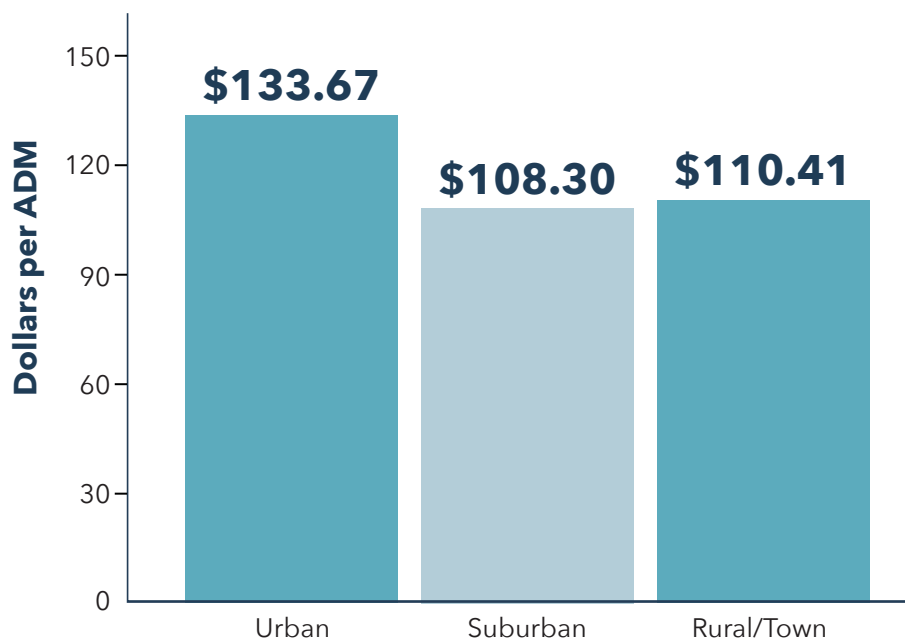
"We used the funding to maintain our K-12 STEM program and our full-day kindergarten program."

- Superintendent Mark Bower,
Rockwood School District,
Somerset County

College and Career Readiness

Seventy-one districts, or about 20% of adequacy districts, spent \$34 million on Career and College Readiness services for students. Statewide, that equaled 7% of all reported adequacy dollars and \$116 per student among reporting districts. Rural, suburban, and urban districts each substantially focused their funding on College and Career Readiness investments.

Adequacy Funding Accounted for an Additional \$116 per ADM for College and Career Readiness



"High school students who once could not afford industry certifications are now earning credentials that open doors to employment and postsecondary opportunities."

– Superintendent Jeannine Kloss,
Kane Area School District,
McKean County

"Adequacy funding has allowed our district to respond to student desires and provide learning opportunities that stretch beyond the traditional and keep students engaged. Those opportunities include offering CTE internally. Our investments have allowed the number of students who are able to take at least one CTE course to grow by over 20%. And now there is no segregation between 'academic' and 'CTE' classes; a student can take both AP Literature and a Vet Tech class."

– Superintendent Dr. Laura Jacob, California Area School District, Washington County



Windber Area School District

"Adequacy funding helps support social workers in all of our schools that are focusing on truancy and removing barriers for families to get students back in school."

–Director of Pupil Services
Michelle Snyder,
Coatesville Area School District,
Chester County

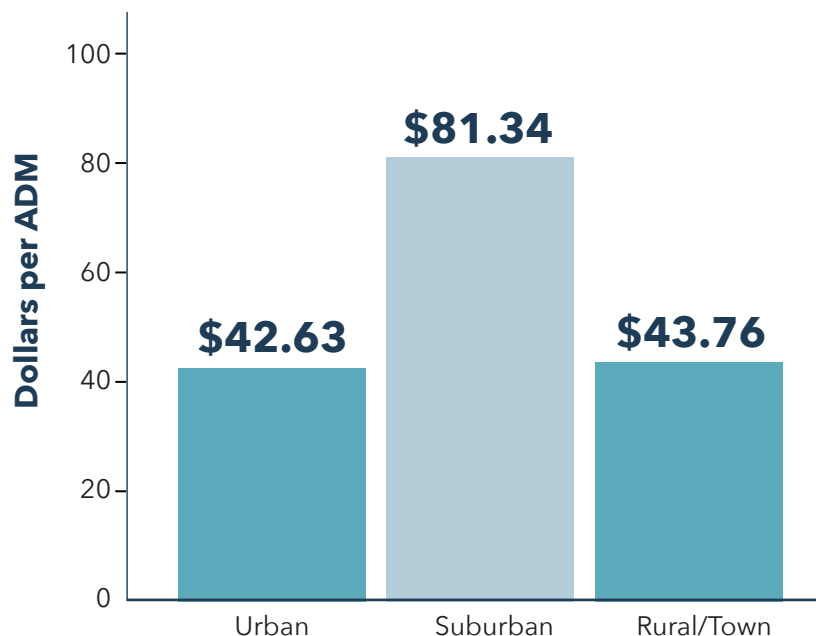
"Adequacy funding supports our robust mental health programs and has allowed us to expand our tutoring and intervention activities to support our students. The continued funding is instrumental for our community schools model. Without this stabilizing funding, these programs would be the first to go."

–Superintendent Jack Silva,
Bethlehem Area School District,
Northampton and Lehigh Counties

Student Well-being and Support Services

The sixth-highest-ranked area of adequacy spending was for physical and mental health supports and student services infrastructure, reflecting investments intended to address barriers to learning and strengthen the broader supports available to students. Overall, 65 districts reported spending in this category, representing 19% of adequacy districts, totaling about \$33 million. Statewide, that equaled 7% of all adequacy spending and \$52 per student. Suburban districts substantially focused their funding on Student Well-Being and Support Services, spending nearly twice as much per student as their rural and urban peers.

Adequacy Funding Accounted for an Additional \$52 per ADM for Student Well-being and Support Services



"We want to make sure every student feels like they belong."

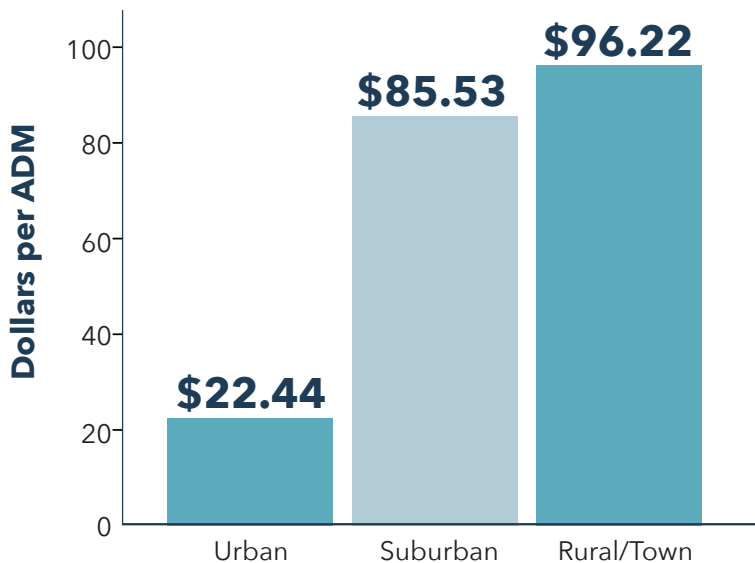
– Michelle Foreman, Southeast Delco School District,
Delaware County

(RTL investments added interventionists for grades 1-8, school counselors, a social worker, and a disrupted youth program)

Class Size Reduction K-3

School districts also reported using adequacy funding to support reductions in class size in the early elementary grades, which can support more individualized instruction and stronger foundational learning. Overall, 68 districts spent adequacy funds to reduce class sizes, representing 20% of adequacy districts, with about \$15 million spent for this purpose. Statewide, that equaled 3% of all reported adequacy dollars and \$84 per student among reporting districts. Urban districts spent significantly less than their rural and suburban peers for this purpose. The likely reason for this variance is that class sizes are typically so large in urban districts that the limited scale of the first installment of adequacy funds could not achieve a substantial reduction.

Adequacy Funding Accounted for an Additional \$84 per ADM to Reduce Class Sizes



"The adequacy dollars allowed us to keep class sizes small, about 15 kindergarten students per class instead of say 25 to 30 students, in our kindergarten center and maximize educational growth and eliminate gaps at an early age."

–Superintendent Charles Suppon,
Wyoming Valley West School District,
Luzerne County

"Everyone feels more supported, because there's more hands to do the work. Growth is happening at an accelerated rate. For the first time, it feels like there's more hope and optimism."

– Superintendent Christopher Dormer,
Norristown Area School District, Montgomery County

(RTL investments added 103 new positions in SY 24/25 – 34 professional staff, 9 support, and 21 returned-from-outsourcing special education positions)

Conclusion

State lawmakers created a sound funding mechanism with the adequacy supplement and established wise limitations on the use of adequacy funds, which are producing promising results. Now the legislature has the opportunity to expand on these transformational investments in students by adopting a FY 27 budget that includes \$565 million in adequacy funds and \$50 million for each of the basic education and special education formulas. A FY 27 budget with these appropriations will send a clear signal that the state lawmakers continue to take the constitutional infringement of the current school funding system seriously. Moreover, appropriating these funds will demonstrate to parents and students in adequacy districts that educate eight of every ten students in the state that state lawmakers are committed to the promise of offering every student a quality education.

Appendix

List of School Districts Interviewed for this Report

Avon Grove School District	Norristown Area School District
Bald Eagle Area School District	Norwin School District
Bethlehem Area School District	Old Forge School District
Blue Ridge School District	Otto-Eldred School District
Bristol Township School District	Oxford Area School District
California Area School District	Panther Valley School District
Carlisle Area School District	Pottstown School District
Chambersburg Area School District	Rockwood School District
Chester Upland School District	School District of Philadelphia
Coatesville Area School District	Scranton School District
Downingtown Area School District	Shenandoah Valley School District
Everett Area School District	Shippensburg Area School District
Hollidaysburg School District	Southeast Delco School District
Homer-Center School District	Union Area School District
Iroquois School District	Upper Darby School District
Kane Area School District	West Chester Area School District
Kennett Consolidated School District	Westmont Hilltop School District
Lehighton Area School District	William Penn School District
Mount Carmel Area School District	Windber Area School District
Neshaminy School District	Woodland Hills School District
New Kensington Arnold School District	Wyoming Valley West School District

Appendix

Specific Investment Categories of the Uses of Adequacy Funds

Final Category Shown in Report	Type	Detailed Category Source
Academic Performance of Students	Standalone	Academic Performance of Students
Early Childhood and Kindergarten	Grouped	Full Day Kindergarten
		Pre-Kindergarten
STEM and Foundational Academic Supports	Grouped	Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Applied Knowledge
		Math and Literacy Programs
		Structured Literacy
Charter School Tuition Increase	Standalone	Charter School Tuition Increase
College and Career Readiness	Grouped	Career Readiness Education
		Career and Technical Education
Student Well-Being and Support Services	Grouped	Physical and Mental Health
		Student Services Infrastructure
Class Size Reduction K-3	Standalone	Standalone
Expanded Learning and Academic Support	Grouped	Tutoring
		Summer Learning Programs
		After School Remediation Programs
Educator Workforce Supports	Grouped	Professional Development
		Incentives for Professional Staff



Questions on Data?

Laura Beltran
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Questions on district interviews?

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Children First
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