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PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE NEWS



"Attorney General Shapiro asks for greater focus on students' mental health due to Safe2Say reporting system"

4/6/2022



"Gubernatorial candidate Shapiro backs case for more, fairer school funding"

5/17/2022



"Doug Mastriano Wants To Defund Public Education In Pennsylvania"

8/27/2022



"Democratic gubernatorial candidate Josh Shapiro wants to continue to increase public education funding in Pennsylvania, while his opponent, Republican Doug Mastriano, wants to dramatically cut it."

8/24/2022



OCTOBER 2022

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT: PUBLIC EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, Pennsylvania is ranked just 17th in K-12 education. Meanwhile, public schools throughout Pennsylvania are trying to fill learning gaps and address lower-than-average test scores that have resulted from closed schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We're also struggling with teacher retention and school safety.

Public education is on the ballot this November. We've prepared this newsletter so that you can get the information you need to make an informed vote.

Voices from Pennsylvanians

Across the Commonwealth, voters are keyed in on education issues. Here's what we're hearing.

Laura G., Mt. Lebanon

Laura is frustrated with the current push to use public tax dollars to fund private schools. This diverts funds from public schools, which desperately need the money, to private schools.

Edward S., Carnegie

Edward believes we should invest in early childhood education and universal pre-K. With kids in school more often, he believes it will help working families save money on child care.

Debra W., West Mifflin

Debra wants to see public education funds distributed equitably. She disapproves of her tax dollars being rerouted to private and charter schools. She believes this is another example of how the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Leilani W., McKeesport

Leilani believes charter schools do not allow time for "kids to be kids" and put too much emphasis on standardized testing.



THE NEW GOVERNOR WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN PA

Where do the candidates stand?

This November, voters will choose between two competing visions for education in Pennsylvania: reducing public school budgets and using tax dollars to fund private schools, or investing to help our public schools recover and get our children back on track.



JOSH SHAPIRO

- Will fight to fully fund our public schools, especially in underserved areas with chronically underfunded schools.¹
- Wants to increase funding for mental health programs in public schools.²
- Pledged to replace politicians with parents on the State Board of Education by appointing at least two parents to the Board.³
- Believes we must end the reliance on standardized testing so teachers can do their jobs.⁴
- Has been endorsed by Pennsylvania State Education Association and AFT Pennsylvania.⁵
- Would triple state funding for union skills programs and vocational training, helping people get good-paying union jobs and ensuring Pennsylvania's manufacturing businesses get the skilled labor they need.⁶

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Josh Shapiro is a strong champion of public education. He is committed to creating the right conditions for our schools to thrive, so that every student, regardless of where they live, can reach their full potential.”

- Rich Askey, President of Pennsylvania State Education Association

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Shapiro, who serves as attorney general, says along with overall increases, he wants to make funding more equitable across districts.”

- WHYY, 8/24/2022

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Donna Cooper, executive director of the Children First schools advocacy group, says Mastriano's plans are wildly out of touch with the realities of K-12 education in the state, including that even religious schools in the state's more prosperous regions cost more than the \$9,000 a year he'd give families.”

- The Philadelphia Inquirer, 6/12/2022

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Many of the harder hit districts would be in the state's most rural areas...”

- Pennsylvania Capital-Star, 8/19/2022

“

We would have to be insane to support what [Mastriano's] offering.”

- Ed Albert, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools



DOUG MASTRIANO

- Proposed slashing per-pupil spending by 52.6%, from \$19,000 to \$9,000, which is comparable to spending in states like Mississippi.⁷
- Has fought efforts to increase state education funding, placing a financial burden on local communities to raise property taxes to make up the difference.⁸
- Under Mastriano's plan, schools in some districts would see revenue cut by as much as 67%.⁹
- Would slash education funding by more than \$12 billion and eliminate more than 49% of jobs in public schools, resulting in drastic staff layoffs, considerable increases in class sizes, and lost student opportunities.¹⁰
- Voted for Senate Bill 1, which proposed giving a massive tax break to corporations and slashing public school budgets to fund private schools.¹¹