

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A STATE EDUCATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA
TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR STUDENTS IN ALL DISTRICTS

WHEREAS, an adequate system of education is necessary for an informed citizenry able to vote, to serve in the legal system as jurors and to understand and effectively participate in our system of self government;

WHEREAS, lawyers and judges in the legal system are increasingly called upon to deal with children in juvenile court and elsewhere who have dropped out of the education system, are at risk of doing so, or are in need of additional educational services which are beyond the financial capacity of their school districts;

WHEREAS, a high percentage of persons incarcerated in prisons have limited skills in reading and basic math, have failed to graduate high school and are unable to qualify for jobs requiring a high school degree;

WHEREAS, there has been a long term decline in jobs available for persons without an adequate education, leaving such persons unable to provide for their families and placing them at increased risk of criminal behavior or dependency upon others;

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution charges the General Assembly to provide for “the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education”;

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth’s funding formula in effect since 1991 has not taken into account the changing number of students, students with increased educational needs, or other cost factors;

WHEREAS, the General Assembly directed the preparation of a Cost of Adequate Education Study to determine what each school district needs financially in order to meet state and federal proficiency standards for all students;

WHEREAS, that Study found: (1) most districts in the state (471 out of 501), including districts in rural areas, small cities, inner suburbs and large cities, need significantly increased funding to adequately meet those proficiency standards, and (2) there is significant inequality in educational resources available to students because of the high reliance on local funding and the great differences in wealth between districts;

WHEREAS, the state share of educational costs (36%) is lower in Pennsylvania than all but six other states;

WHEREAS, the Governor has proposed addressing each district’s need for increased funds found by the Cost of Adequate Education Study through a six year program to provide state funds in accordance with the relative financial capacity of each district and its tax effort, along with accountability measures to assure their effective use;

WHEREAS, the Administration proposal does not reduce existing state funding for any district nor interfere with the existing ability of districts to raise and spend local funds;

AND WHEREAS, the mission of the Pennsylvania Bar Association includes “to promote the administration of justice.”

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Pennsylvania Bar Association finds that the adequate education of all the Commonwealth’s students without regard to the community they live in is a matter of high importance to the welfare of the system of self-government in our Commonwealth, and the administration of justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the General Assembly is urged to promptly enact a formula for educational funding that provides all districts with adequate resources, in accordance with the Cost of Adequate Education Study, to meet state proficiency standards at a fair local tax rate, that such formula not deprive any district of funding that it currently receives, and that the Commonwealth phase in the funding of the state share within six years.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Pennsylvania Bar Association authorizes its president and officers to communicate the content and spirit of this resolution to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Governor, the press, PBA members, the general public, and whomsoever they deem appropriate.

Arthur N. Read, Co-Chair
Michael Churchill, Co-Chair
PBA Education Funding Ad Hoc Committee

May 8, 2008

**The PBA Board of Governors discussed this recommendation on June 4, 2008 with the vote resulting in a tie.*

***Approved by the PBA House of Delegates on June 6, 2008.*