
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 243 Session of
2010

INTRODUCED BY PICCOLA, DINNIMAN, BROWNE, M. WHITE, TOMLINSON,
FOLMER, ARGALL, WARD, ERICKSON, PILEGGI, GORDNER, BOSCOLA,
STACK, WAUGH, RAFFERTY AND EARLL, FEBRUARY 8, 2010

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 8, 2010

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study of efficiency in public school funding and directing
3 the State Board of Education to provide documents and
4 assistance to the Joint State Government Commission in its
5 conduct of this study.

6 WHEREAS, The General Assembly authorized a Statewide costing-
7 out study for public education funding under Act 114 of 2006;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, The State Board of Education was delegated the
10 authority to hire a consultant to perform this study; and

11 WHEREAS, The State Board of Education contracted with
12 Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) of Denver, Colorado, to
13 conduct the study; and

14 WHEREAS, This study's legislative intent was to examine
15 issues of adequacy and equity in public school funding and to
16 determine the basic cost per pupil to provide an education that
17 will permit a student to meet the Commonwealth's academic
18 standards and assessments; and

19 WHEREAS, Act 114 specifically requires the study to examine

1 "exemplary school districts that are high-performing and low-
2 spending school districts," but Act 114 does not explicitly
3 mandate other methodologies to be applied in the study; and

4 WHEREAS, The study conducted by APA subsequently used three
5 methodologies: a "Successful Schools" approach that was
6 consistent with the explicit requirements of Act 114, but also
7 two additional methodologies referred to as "Professional
8 Judgment" panels and "Evidence-Based" research that were not
9 required under law; and

10 WHEREAS, The final report issued to the Commonwealth by APA
11 used a combination of all three of these methodologies to
12 recommend specific dollar amounts for the basic cost per pupil,
13 plus additional weights and other modifications that increase
14 the basic cost per pupil; and

15 WHEREAS, The final report does not provide any indication as
16 to how the three methodologies were combined or compared against
17 one another, nor does it provide any other information detailing
18 how the specific recommended numbers in its findings were
19 actually calculated in the study; and

20 WHEREAS, Both the State Board of Education and APA testified
21 to the Education Committee of the Senate on December 8, 2009,
22 that the specific methodology applied to derive the final
23 funding recommendation cannot be disclosed to the General
24 Assembly because APA believes it is proprietary information; and

25 WHEREAS, The results of this study call for an additional
26 target of \$4.61 billion annually of taxpayer funds for public
27 school funding, or a 26.8% increase, but APA testified that it
28 cannot provide the quantitative numbers used to justify this
29 target; and

30 WHEREAS, The "Successful Schools" approach used by APA in the

1 study was the only methodology that was explicitly authorized in
2 Act 114 because it focused on high-performing and low-spending
3 school districts; and

4 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth should focus its attention toward
5 the most efficient use of the dollars already available for
6 public schools; and

7 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth should build upon the work already
8 conducted in the original costing-out study by examining the
9 schools identified in the report under the "Successful Schools"
10 methodology to learn their best practices and other factors that
11 have resulted in their identification as a high-performing, low-
12 spending school district; therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government
14 Commission to conduct a study of the 82 school districts found
15 to be successful schools in the APA costing-out study and to
16 issue a report to the chairman of the Education Committee of the
17 Senate of their best practices and other factors that are
18 believed to help contribute to this recognized efficiency and
19 success; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the State Board of Education
21 to cooperate fully with the Joint State Government Commission in
22 providing documentation from the original costing-out study and
23 other assistance as the Joint State Government Commission
24 requests; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the report from the Joint State Government
26 Commission be submitted to the chairman of the Education
27 Committee of the Senate no later than November 1, 2010; and be
28 it further

29 RESOLVED, That the final report serve as the basis for future
30 deliberations by the Senate on the Commonwealth's basic

1 education funding levels and components.

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